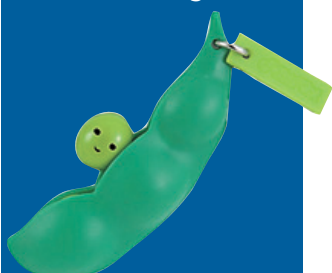


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Trapped workers a reminder of subway dangers



The Daxing subway line is under construction and will open to traffic 10 months ahead of schedule. After the collapse of Hangzhou subway stop, a safety in Beijing subways has come under intense scrutiny. **CFP Photo**

By Venus Lee

A construction site at Xiaoshanxianghustation on Hangzhou's subway line collapsed with 21 workers inside last Saturday afternoon. Eight workers were killed in the collapse, and Xinhua reported that the remaining 13 have no chance to survive. The cave-in is the worst in the history of Chinese subway construction.

The collapse created a sinkhole which swallowed up neighboring houses and damaged others, Xinhua reported.

Mei Xiaofeng, vice president of China Tiesiju Civil Engineering, the construction company, which is building the subway, attributed the accident to muddy layers of clay and heavy overhead impact caused by car traffic. Frequent rains during the last month contributed to the sliding of soil and sand.

Rescue and investigation efforts continue, but the accident has revived concerns over rapid

subway development.

Halted for inspection

All subway construction sites in Beijing halted work to accept security inspectors on Monday afternoon.

Work will remain on hold until all security risks have been identified and dealt with, Qin Zhaohui, director of information services of the Beijing Metro Construction Administration Corporation (BMCAC), said.

BMCAC said seven new lines are under construction, and six will enter construction next year.

All the construction sites will be monitored by cameras to ensure safety, Zhao said. "The Company has completed its real-time supervisory network. Each construction site has been installed with electronic monitors, and all the data can be transmitted to the monitoring center," he said.

Beijing ground is 'safe'

"My family worries when I

have to work underground, but that's my job. If I quit over safety hazards, how can I support my family?" Yuan Jun, a construction worker, said.

Pang Ye, a Tonghuijiayuan resident near the Sihui rail station, worries about her living conditions. "The collapse is ghastly. I won't buy an apartment near a subway line any time soon," she said.

However, Shen Jingyan, an urban rail engineer with the Beijing Urban Engineering Design and Research Institute, said Beijing's ground is much more stable than Hangzhou's, which contains a layer of saturated sand.

The municipal government has made safety in urban railway construction a priority, Shen said. It has minimized risk during the design phase.

Inherent problems

To support rapid urbanization and ease traffic, the govern-

ment has focused its money and energy on the construction of an urban rail transit network. However, tunnel collapses have happened in Shenzhen, Guanzhou, Nanjing, Shanghai and Beijing during the last few years.

No matter whether the collapse was caused by geologic or human activity, construction continues to have problems, Shen said. "A full and accurate feasibility report must be prepared before construction begins, but some cities are skipping the research that comes between planning and designing."

"Some builders compress the construction process to complete the project earlier, but ignore the realities of construction. Many workers are rural migrants with no professional training about basic subway construction, so they cannot identify dangers or protect themselves," he said.

Organ donors flock to Shenzhen's Red Cross

By Zhang Dongya

Zhao Huixia, 38, a migrant worker in Shenzhen who was diagnosed with cervical cancer, decided to donate her corneas to the Red Cross Society of China's Shenzhen branch Wednesday. Zhao is one of 5,000 volunteers who registered as donors in the city.

The Red Cross Society of Shenzhen established the country's first Organ Donation Office this month. It was one of the city's most important steps since the government passed its first donor regulations in 2003.

"The office will take charge of communicating with donors and coordinating organ donations. It is expected to be an efficient platform for both donors and recipients," Gao Min, coordinator of the office, said.

Lack of information and misinformation remain the main obstacles to organ donation, Gao said. She said many people phone the office trying to illegally sell human organs.

Organ donation is a relatively new program in China, and many willing donors have traveled to Shenzhen to sign up due to a lack of official donor channels in their own areas. Gao said the office is open to donors from anywhere in China, but suggested that to save on costs, they may be better off undergoing surgery in a local hospital after they sign a donor application.

The Red Cross Society of Shenzhen began to open information kiosks at local hospitals in 2006. It produced Regulations on Organ Donation and Donation Application, a pamphlet to inform people about the donor procedure and related knowledge. It plans to add more kiosks in official departments, enterprises, factories and communities.

In 2003, the Regulations on Donation and Transplantation of Human Organs were enacted in Shenzhen. It was the first law to regulate the field. However, as a Shenzhen local law, it has no bearing on donations in other provinces.

So far, over 5,000 volunteers have registered to donate marrow and corneas in Shenzhen, and 11 people have donated their remains.

Gov tells taxis to get back on the road, unionize

By Han Manman

The All China Federation of Trade Unions (ACFTU) is encouraging the taxi industry to unionize after drivers in three cities struck this month. Drivers cited competition from unlicensed taxis and rising vehicle rental costs as their greatest problems.

Union is necessary

"The long-standing conflicts over management systems, industry guidance and distribution of profits have led to an unsound environment for the industry and its employees," the ACFTU said in a statement posted on its Web site Monday.

"Taxi drivers lack suitable and efficient channels for voicing their complaints, which is the root of these mass incidents," the statement said.

The ACFTU recommended that taxi companies plan collective bargaining mechanisms with their drivers and implement labor contracts that would set salaries, vacation time and social insurance payments.

Beijing has taxi unions

The Beijing Federation of Trade Unions (BFTU) began to set up taxi unions in the municipality in 2000.

"Most Beijing taxi companies are already unionized," Li Zhiqun, director of the BFTU transporta-

tion department, said. Its method of bargaining is comparatively well executed, and BFTU has not identified any serious problems in the local taxi industry.

"Our company has a union. Because of it, we can freely express our complaints. Every year, we can also participate in an assessment of our leaders' work," Jiang Xinyue, a driver with Beijing Shouqi Taxi, said.

"We don't have a union in the company. When we have problems or complaints, we have no one to tell and have to endure on our own," another taxi driver, Li Zheng, said. "Setting up a union is important, but what's more important is how the

chairman of the union is appointed."

Li said nothing will be changed if the chairman is appointed by company leaders instead of elected by the drivers.

Back on the road

An estimated 2,000 taxi drivers in Sanya, Hainan Province, returned to work Friday following their five-day strike. The drivers were protesting the local government's failure to cut the costs of vehicle rental and curb competition from illegal taxis.

Sanya party secretary Jiang Zelin promised that a January 1 directive to cut monthly rental fees to 5,300 yuan from 7,200 yuan

would be implemented.

He said companies that ignore the reduction will be forced to return any extra money they charged their drivers over the past 11 months.

Three transport officials in Sanya resigned after failing to act on the directive.

The action followed a two-day strike in Chongqing by 9,000 drivers angry about shortages of compressed natural gas, high fines for traffic violations and illegal competition. Drivers in Yongdeng county, Gansu Province, also halted work to protest the number of illegal taxis.

Diving coach says evidence a sham, vows lawsuit

By Huang Daohen

Former head coach of the national diving team Yu Fen said this week she will continue her quest to prosecute the China Swimming Administrative Center (SAC), after the country's top swimming governing body claimed Monday there was no misconduct in its distribution of bonuses.

The SAC released figures at Monday's press conference that showed Yu was only owed 261,325.5 yuan, as opposed to the millions of yuan she claimed. It also produced photographic evidence showing Yu's bankbook and most of the principal sum having already been paid.

The press conference was the

SAC's first public response to Yu's accusations against current national diving team director Zhou Jihong for financial misappropriation.

However, the outspoken Yu, who has been at odds with her replacement Zhou since she left the team in 1997, called the figures a sham. She made a personal statement hours after the SAC's announcement that she doubted the authenticity of the list.

"I have never seen this bankbook," said Yu, who went on to develop budding stars at Tsinghua University after leaving the national team.

As one of the most influential diving coaches who trained

diving queens and Olympic stars Fu Mingxia and Guo Jingjing, Yu sent a letter to the nation's sports watchdog earlier this year claiming that Zhou misappropriated several million yuan of bonuses earned by divers that Yu had developed.

The letter was recently posted online anonymously, and many readers demanded the establishment of a fair and transparent bonus system for the national teams.

The case has escalated, and Yu refuses to let the issue drop.

"With all the evidence available and with the involvement of the judiciary, I don't think the diving team can escape the reach

of the law," Yu told the *Beijing Youth Daily*.

However, Wang Jin, a senior sports commentator, said the current system was sound and legal. There are regulations for the distribution of coaches' bonuses, he said.

But he did note that the sports governing bodies are granted too much power. "Domestic laws related to sports are outdated and have not been revised in over 20 years," he said.

"The legal rules related to every sport in China are governed and managed by their respective national associations and administrations," he said. "They have absolute power."

Official says former mistress, Web site violated his privacy

By Zhang Dongya

A branch director from the Xinjiang taxation bureau is taking a Web site to court for posting articles about his relationship with an ex-mistress. The case was heard in Xinjiang Monday, and has been accepted by the people's court of Chongwen District in Beijing.

Liu Haifeng, director of the Nanjiang branch of the Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region's Taxation Bureau, said the site posted many articles about him and his former mistress.

The articles came from Ernai Weiquan Wang, a Web site aimed at protecting the rights of officials' mistresses, called "ernai" in Chinese. Zheng Baichun, who holds a master's degree in law, founded the site in 2006.

This May, a woman named Zhang claimed as Liu's mistress had asked him for help. She composed and sent several articles about the couple to Zheng, along with the couple's photos.

Zheng said he posted the articles and photos on his Web site after visiting Xinjiang to confirm the story.

"Zhang signed an affidavit stating that all her words were true, and I witnessed evidence in Xinjiang," Zheng said.

His posting would shake up the tax bureau.

Liu said his life fell apart as leaders, family and friends began to question him. He said the Web site exposed his name, workplace and photographs to the public without permission, which he contends violated his privacy.

He denied everything that his ex-mistress said, and filed a suit against the Web site under privacy tort and against the woman for libel. He claimed 130,000 yuan in damages.

Zheng said this lawsuit is the first case filed against the Web site since its founding. "It is controversial to protect the rights of ernai in China. Many people think they deserve the worst," he said.

"Previous cases involving ernai showed they are constantly at a disadvantage. But I think that when their rights are violated, the law should stand up for them," Zheng said.

The articles and pictures have been removed from the Web site. "To avoid exposing this case to bias, we have taken down the articles," a message on the Web site said.

Zheng said he is confident he will win the lawsuit.

Swearing on their steamed bread



Four hundred students vow on their "mantou" to treasure food and grain at Henan University in Zhengzhou, Henan Province. Wu Junjun, director of student activities, said the scene was a "performance art" to make students respect food. The school said that its 10,000 students dine at the cafeteria every day, and waste as much as 5 percent of their 4,000 kilograms of food.

(By Annie Wei)

Photo provided by Dongfang Jinbao

Schools of hope become shelters for pigs, chickens in Hubei Province

By Jackie Zhang

During the late 1990s, there was a strong drive to build Hope Schools (Xiwang Xiaoxue) throughout the country. These schools were a response to the government's policy of spreading its nine years of compulsory education to every region and to make education accessible to the poorest children.

However, the present day conditions of these Hope Schools may leave donors feeling hopeless.

Changyang County in Hubei Province was once a model county for these Hope Schools. By the end of the 1990s, there were 76 hope schools in Changyang. Today, 18 continue to function; the other 58 schools have been closed or merged.

Yang Dapeng donates to the hope schools. His hometown is Yangjiaping Village in Changyang. In 1997, the village intended

to renovate the schools, but few villagers had money to spare. Yang donated almost 80,000 yuan which he earned over seven years in Guangdong Province. Dapeng Hope School was established and Yang became its honorary headmaster.

"At the end of every semester, I gave students with good scores a scholarship to encourage them," Yang said. "I didn't usually go to the school, but I made the trip at least once a year. When I came back to the school two years later, I found the school was closed down. No children studied there, but no one would tell me why or when the school was shut down!"

The Mao'erchong Hope School in Duiwuxi Village is another example. The school, established in 1995, was the first hope school in Changyang to receive government money.

"When the school was built, there were 400 students, including children from seven nearby villages," Liu Guanglin, the village's party secretary, said. "In 2000, the number of students fell to 100. At that point, it was combined with another nearby school."

The field which was once a playground was bought by a local villager. The slides and games have been replaced by corn and potato fields. The classrooms and teachers' dormitories are used to raise pigs and chickens.

"It's a common problem in Hubei Province. In many other counties and regions, other hope schools have come to the same end," Liu Yongchang, director of the Changyang Education Bureau, said. A decline in enrollment was the reason he cited.

Liu said the number of students in primary and middle school was 80,000. But after

2000, there were only 40,000 students in Changyang. "Many people went out to work and they took their children together with them. Besides, the one-child-policy has helped to hold down the number of new births," he said.

However, its lack of future planning was the most severe problem. "The population change could have been predicted. The local government made a strategy without investigation and thinking ahead. The end result was that donors wasted their money and ended up disappointed," Yang said.

Liu admitted they too had not thought much about the schools' future. "We saw too much political achievement and passion. Some villages built three schools at once even though their village had only 10 children. It was all a mistake," he said.

“Sometimes grief is also a power. People have to get hurt to grow up.”

Boys cry too

A not so happy Spring Festival

For China, Spring Festival is the most important holiday. It is a time for family reunions and being with loved ones.

When Lin Yi brought his boyfriend home for Spring Festival 2003 and came out to his parents, the 15 days of celebration would be his last with his family.

“I still cannot remember all the details of that day when I finally told my parents I liked boys,” Lin, 21, said. He looked confused as he thought back to five years ago. “My mother asked why I would bring home a total stranger for the holiday. I didn’t know what else to say, so I just told her the truth.”

His mother, a high school teacher in Shenyang, Liaoning Province, was stunned by her son’s blunt revelation. She could not understand why her 16-year-old son, who had just dropped out of high school, had decided to give her an even bigger reason to be furious.

While most households were drowned in the noise of firecrackers and laughter as families tuned in for CCTV’s New Year’s Gala, the Lin household sat in silence. His mother and stepfather refused to speak to him. Only Lin and his boyfriend An Ning stayed in the room to watch TV.

“Now that I think about it, my mother was probably too shocked to talk to me. She wasn’t angry. During the last few days of our stay, she took very good care of An after I told her what happened to his leg,” Lin said.

His boyfriend’s leg had been crushed. After he dropped out of high school, Lin went to Dalian, Liaoning Province, to be with An, a bartender in a local gay bar. Lin found work as a waiter.

In 2002, Lin was 15 years old. For many customers, the tall, young boy-waiter was far more enticing than anything on the drinks menu. When An saw his boyfriend being harassed, he got into a fight with several customers and his left leg was crushed.

After Lin related this story to his mother, she cooled off and started to take care of An.

But what Lin had not realized was that at the same time, his parents had hatched a plan to “cure” him. “The day before I was leaving, they sat me down and told me they wanted to send me to South Korea to study. Their logic was that if I were in another country and away from An, maybe I would become ‘normal’ again,” he said.

When Lin, being in love, refused their proposal, an even bigger fight began. “My mother cried and shouted; my stepfather called me ‘defective,’” he said.

After that, he was kicked out of the house and his parents severed all ties to him. “They knew little about homosexuality,” he said.

In a survey conducted by Li Yinhe, a pioneer in the study of homosexuality, three-quarters of all respondents can “tolerate (a homosexual family member), but wish he/she would change.” The number of respondents who could accept a gay family member was the same as the number of those who could never accept one: one-tenth.

When showed the data, Lin shook his head and said, “I guess my family falls into

By Milo Lee

Intensive media coverage the last several years has inspired many of China’s homosexuals to come out of the closet.

For many though, the image of the same sex couple remains sexually-obsessed, socially-immoral and domestically-irresponsible people who are at a high risk for contracting HIV.

But regardless of social stereotypes and media image, homosexuals are people who suffer as all people do. This story explores the “normal side” of a same-sex relationship. All given names are aliases with the exception of Lin Yi.

that 10 percent.”

In sickness and in health

When Lin was two years old, his biological father left the family. His mother was busy with teaching, so Lin and his big brother were sent to his grandma’s home in the countryside, where he met An, the next door neighbor of his grandma and seven years his senior.

Lin was a small child and was often bullied by others. “I looked up to him as a brother, and he acted like one. Whenever someone picked on me, he would always protect me,” He said. His dependence on An began to grow, and in no time the feeling grew into admiration – and something else.

At age six, Lin returned to Shenyang to attend primary school. He could only visit An during summer and winter vacations. But second grade taught him an invaluable skill: letter-writing. He began to write An regularly to say how much he missed him. An would write back. Their exchange continued for four years until An quit writing.

Lin, then 11, hurried back to his grandma’s home only to find out An had dropped out of school and went to Dalian to seek work. They lost touch until the next summer vacation, when Lin lost his virginity to An.

They talked on the phone and tried to visit as often as they could the next four years. In his sophomore year of high school, Lin could no longer bear the pressure from his parents and school while keeping up a long-distance relationship with An. Without telling his family, he quit school and left for Dalian to find his boyfriend.

After the split with his family, Lin moved in with An. But just when Lin thought everything from then on would go uphill, An was diagnosed with liver disease.

An’s father died when he was little, and his mother remarried a few years later but lived a hard life. With his leg broken, An could not work and had to spend all his savings on medical treatment. Lin, who still waited tables by night, decided to take a day job as the bookkeeper at a recycling plant to cover their daily expenses.

“It was hard back then. I remember I lost my wages once. I couldn’t tell him. I went to the market and bought a bag of steamed buns and a jar of chili sauce with the 10 yuan

I had in another pocket,” he said. For the next two weeks of a northern China winter, buns and chili sauce were his only food.

“I was afraid the buns would go bad, so I threw them on the roof. The weather was my big fridge,” Lin said with a laugh.

The day job, buns and chili sauce were all kept secret from An, but it would not be long before Lin was hiding an even bigger secret.

Desperate for money, Lin began to sell his body. “I know it was wrong, but there was no choice,” he said, still embarrassed about the decision. “I only did it for a month, up until an awful incident. After that I stopped.”

The incident was when Lin was tricked into a gang bang by a group of sado-masochists. “I only remember that I passed out while crying. When I woke up, I rushed home to take a shower. I scrubbed myself with steel wool – the kind people use to scrub pans. I scrubbed until I bled.” On his left shoulder is a tattoo of an eagle’s wing. Below the wing is a scar left by the steel wool.

“I never told anyone this, not even An Ning,” Lin said.

Life after love

“Do you believe in life after love?” asks Cher’s hit song Believe. Lin said it is one of his favorite songs when he was working at the gay bar.

Last spring, Lin ended his relationship with An. An had married a woman.

Zhang Beichuan, a doctor who studies homosexuality, said in an interview that 80 percent of gay men in China marry to escape pressures from society and family. An was part of that 80 percent.

As his liver recovered, An’s mother began to pressure him to start a family. He was torn between his love for Lin and his mother’s pleadings.

Earlier last year, An’s mother contacted Lin and asked him to leave her son alone. Lin, unwilling to see his lover suffer, decided to give up.

He changed his cell phone number and returned to school to prepare for the National College Entrance Exams in June, and he enrolled in a university in Hebei Province last September.

“I was very glad that I got into a university, and I felt like my life had finally started to change,” he said.

Three months later, he was out of school again. “I heard from a mutual friend that An Ning’s disease had worsened and he had developed liver cancer. I decided to quit college so I could find a job to help him. After all, we did have eight years of love,” he said.

“Sometimes grief is also power. People have to get hurt to grow up.”

It was Lin’s first blog post after he moved to Beijing.

He came to Beijing in early 2008. Finding a good job as a college drop-out was difficult, so he turned to waiting tables in a karaoke bar.

“It was horrible. Some drunk customers offered me money to have sex with them. It was only in the past few years that I learned about the heightened risk of STDs inherent in gay sex, so I will never do that (sex for money) again,” he said.

Lin said he has changed a lot since he moved to Beijing. He is most proud that he was able to quit smoking.

But one thing that did not change is his concern for An. “I think about him all the time, but I do not want to disturb his family. I called his wife once and asked her for her bank account number. Now, whenever I have some extra money, I send it to her,” he said. Lin told the woman he was an old friend of her husband’s and that she should not tell him about it.

“Maybe some people will think I am crazy, but during the most difficult times, he was the only one that loved me and helped me. His condition is not improving. I see what I do as a thank-you for all our happy times together,” Lin said.

After five years, his relationship with his family has begun to thaw. But there is one topic both parties avoid in their conversation. “My mother calls me sometimes, but only to chitchat. My brother also calls from time to time, but only because he needs money at college,” he said.

Evading the real obstacle that stands between them is not for the best, but at least they are talking now, Lin said.

“I think someday I will probably get married too. It will make my parents happy,” Lin said. Deep down, he does not want to marry a woman, but he does not want to be alone when he is old. “Same-sex relationships are too unstable. There is no legal guarantee (holding people together),” he said.

Next month, Lin will leave Beijing. A friend found him work as a store guide in Yueyang, Hunan Province. “Beijing is an expensive city. On my wages, it would be years before I could afford to open my own clothing store,” Lin said. “I want to start over with a clean slate.”

In his latest blog entry, Lin wrote: “If I could choose, I would wish we had never met, never fallen in love and that you had never hurt me. I don’t know how long it will be before I can forget you, or even if I will have the courage to forget. But one thing I am sure of is that this love, this wrenching pain in my heart, will be with me for a long time to come.”

The entry was headlined, “Before falling in the river of love, you should check how deep it is.”



China a hot spot for US students



Recent years have seen more international students studying in China.

CFP Photo

(The New York Times) – Record numbers of US students are studying abroad, with particularly strong growth in educational exchanges with China, the annual report by the Institute on International Education said.

The number of US residents studying in China increased by 25 percent, and the number of Chinese students studying at US universities increased by 20 percent last year, according to the

report, "Open Doors 2008."

"Interest in China is growing dramatically, and I think we'll see even sharper increases in next year's report," Allan E. Goodman, the institute's president, said. "People used to go to China to study the history and language, and many still do. But with China looming so large in all our futures, there's been a real shift, and more students go for an understanding of

what's happening economically and politically."

While the traditional study-abroad sites for US citizens – Britain, Italy, Spain and France – still attract more students, the report found that China is now the fifth most popular destination.

In the 2006-2007 academic year, the latest for which figures are available, 11,064 US students went to China, a large jump from 1995-96 when only 1,396 studied here.

Following the Beijing Olympics, interest in China has grown rapidly. This year, 218 students applied to the State Department for financial support to study in China, compared with 114 applications for the 2006-2007 academic year.

Applications to programs like the Inter-university Program for Chinese Language Studies, a consortium of 13 American universities, have skyrocketed.

Beijing hints at building first aircraft carrier

(FT) – The world should not be surprised if China builds an aircraft carrier, but Beijing would use such a vessel only for offshore defense, a senior official of the Chinese Ministry of National Defence said.

The comments from Major General Qian Lihua, director of the ministry's Foreign Affairs Office, come amid speculation within China and abroad that the increasingly potent naval arm of the People's Liberation Army (PLA) has decided to develop and deploy its first aircraft carrier.

Traditionally, a carrier would operate within a battle group of smaller ships to protect it.

The Pentagon said earlier this year that China was actively engaged in aircraft carrier research and would be able to start building one by the end of this decade, while *Jane's Defence Weekly* reported last month that the PLA was training 50 students to become naval pilots.

Qian declined to comment on whether China had decided to build a carrier, but he made clear that it had every right to do so.

China bans 'kung fu football' from TV

(The Canadian Press) – China's top domestic football matches have been taken off national television because of on-field fighting at a recent game, with reports comparing some players to "martial arts" experts.

Jiang Heping, the head of sport for CCTV has said he would prefer to show foreign games.

He has accused some players in the China Super League of lacking "professional ethics" following a scuffle last week between clubs from Beijing and its neighboring city of Tianjin.

After the match, angry local fans attacked the bus of the visiting Tianjin team.

The China News Agency has likened Super League games to "a kung fu movie" and some players to "martial arts heroes."

The Beijing Olympics were widely regarded as a sporting success, but the world's most popular game has been mostly a disaster in the world's most populous country.

Trend: Chinese studies seen as investment

By Zheng Lu

"Because of the Olympic Games, foreigners have noticed that China has really changed. We believe that growth will continue even faster," said Salomon Montenegro, who is in his third year of PhD studies at the Beijing University of Aeronautics and Astronautics (BUAA).

Montenegro, from Venezuela, has lived in Beijing for three years and said being in China opened doors to foreign students. "China provides opportunities for foreigners who want to participate in cross-cultural

exchanges and who want to receive special training in a field like sports." He said China "is great for developing yourself in almost everything."

For others, money is the reason they came to China. "I came to China because of the rising economic importance of knowing the Chinese language," said Jason Misium, a Harvard graduate who is teaching mathematics at Fermat Academy, an institute in Beijing. Whether or not the country develops as quickly as people expect it to, there are still 1.3 billion people

here who speak Mandarin, he said. "Being able to communicate with this enormous segment of the world population is important to me."

Rixio Morales, a Venezuelan student currently studying at BUAA, said studying in China is "an integral option for young students looking for new perspectives." He thinks the reason that an increasing number of international students come here is the country's key role in various international fields. He said competition among Chinese students is fierce and just

this fact raises the local quality of education.

"The number of overseas student enrollees has grown since the Olympics," said Sun Xian-yao, secretary at the Communication University of China's College of International Students, one of the universities that has a big population of foreign students.

She said most of the international students come to study Chinese. "After all, they first have to pass the language before they can go on to their majors," she said.



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State Council may recognize private money lenders

By Huang Daohen

Private money lenders may be recognized by the law if the new regulations drafted by the central bank on private lending pass State Council review.

The new policy allows individuals and companies to extend loans if they do not have bad credit or a criminal record. If approved, it will break the domestic banks' monopoly on the credit market and legalize private lending, Liu Ping, vice director of the People's Bank of China, said at a recent conference in Beijing.

According to the draft bill, individuals can register as private money lenders if they do not take in deposit money. Business owners must also have a spotless credit history.

A statutory maximum for loan interest is set to be no higher than four times the base interest rate, the draft said. Some underground banks impose interest rates of 200 to 300 percent on loans, according to an investigation conducted by the central bank.

Experts were optimistic

about the new policy. "Private lending can open up the credit market, especially during the current financial crisis," said Zhao Xiao, an economics professor at the University of Science and Technology Beijing.

Private credit business has long been labeled "underground banking," Zhao said the move to legalize it indicates the long-thriving business in some coastal regions can emerge from its previous backstage operations.

"The move will be of great significance to the introduction

of competition in the country's financial market, which has long been dominated by State-run banks," he said.

The global financial crisis has forced China to face grim economic prospects this year. Previous media reports said a number of domestic enterprises in southern China, especially middle and small-sized ones, were plagued by severe funding insufficiency.

Non-governmental capital should make up for an insufficiency in the official capital market, Zhao said.

China now largest holder of US debt

China has overtaken Japan as the largest foreign holder of US government debt.

The latest monthly Treasury International Capital (Tic) data showed that China's holdings of Treasury bills, notes and bonds rose to US \$585 billion (4 trillion yuan) in September from August's \$541.4 billion. In contrast, Japan's holdings slipped from US \$586 billion to \$573.2 billion.

The figures showed that US investors sold a record \$38 billion in foreign bonds, following record sales in August and July. That repatriation of funds supported the dollar and will help the US finance its current account deficit.

"The big story in US Treasury foreign purchases in September was that China's holdings of US government debt surpassed Japan for the first time," said George Goncalves, strategist at Morgan Stanley.

(Agencies)

Adventurer wants China onboard for solar plane

By Li Jing

Solar Impulse and its partner, the International Air Transport Association (IATA), presented a project Tuesday that would have a solar-powered aircraft fly around the world on no fuel and with zero emissions.

Solar Impulse is building the first prototype airplane to demonstrate the feasibility of flying day and night, only propelled by solar energy. The first test flights will take place in early 2009, and in 2011 the aircraft powered only by rays of sunlight will fly around the world in 25 days with five stopovers.

The project is designed to research renewable energy. Its goal is not to sell the aircraft, but to convey a message that it is essential to develop efficient equipments that consume less, as well as alternative sources of energy – especially solar energy.

A workforce of 155 specialists from eight countries and 55 partners from part of the US \$90 million (415 million yuan) project.

"Since China is the center of the world, I want to link this project with China in a proper way," Bertrand Piccard, the initiator and president of Solar Impulse, said.

Piccard has been to China three times. "My first visit was between 1998 and 1999, when I was preparing my non-stop balloon circumnavigation." That non-stop balloon flight was the longest – both in distance and in air time – in the history of aviation.

During this visit in China, Solar Impulse negotiated with Chinese authorities about aviation and permission to land, hoping to have China as one of the solar aircraft's five stopovers. Setting out from Dubai and after five-days-and-nights non-stop flight, Solar Impulse hopes to land in China before flying over the Pacific Ocean.

Solar Impulse also welcomes Chinese companies, business representatives or economic institutions to join in the project. "Companies becoming our partners must match our spirit for pioneering, saving energy and promoting high-tech renewable energy," Andre Borschberg, CEO of Solar Impulse, said.

Suntech, a private solar energy enterprise in China, may work with Solar Impulse on its solar cells in the future.

Small is big at Chinese auto show



China's automakers at the ongoing Guangzhou auto show this week introduced small, inexpensive cars for consumers squeezed by a slowing economy and increasingly expensive gasoline.

Zhejiang Geely Automobile Group, for example, showed the Panda, including an electric version, while Ford Motor unveiled a four-door version of the Fiesta small car. The Fiesta goes on sale in the US in 2010 with a different grille and fascia.

Most of the new small cars at the show have engines with displacements of 1.0 to 1.6 liters.

The small cars are aimed at consumers born after 1980, who tend to be urban, affluent and tuned to global trends.

The recent boom in auto sales was driven by larger cars for older consumers and government officials.

CFP Photo

Search giant sunk by its ad program

By Zheng Lu

Baidu may find itself China's first Internet defendant in an anti-trust case, after a string of reports ranging from search manipulation to aiding in misinformation have shaken confidence in the country's biggest search engine.

Last Sunday, CCTV exposed that the Competitive Rankings search system of Baidu worked by selling search terms, and had opened the doors to spam and malignant Web sites. In its half-hour program, it revealed that a search for "tumor" on Baidu yielded cancerclub.com as its first result.

The Web site claimed its doctor was a professor who worked for the Chinese Medical Association. A phone call to the association confirmed all the information on cancerclub.com was fake. The program revealed that to help its advertisers, Baidu used Adobe Photoshop to alter photos of fake medications to make them appear real.

Days before the CCTV program aired, a Hebei man named Wang Guanyu sued Baidu for abusing its market dominance. Wang signed a contract with Baidu's Competitive

Rankings in March at a price of 0.55 to 3.8 yuan per click. In the next few months, Wang's Web site attracted a lot of customers and topped the list in search results. When Wang dropped his payments to 0.55 yuan per click, he found incoming traffic from Baidu fell from 80,000 visitors to four.

Wang claimed Baidu banned his links and blacked out his information. Baidu replied that his drop in rankings and its Competitive Rankings program were separate issues. It said it blocked Wang for distributing massive amounts of spam.

At the Internet Forum "Searching for future" held last week, Li Kaifu, vice-president of Google.com, said it is unfair to sell search positions to clients. "Man-made interference will impair the benefits searching brings to the Internet community," he said.

On its Help Center, Baidu said, "Baidu will not penalize customers (who do not renew). The sponsored search and natural rankings of Web pages are two different systems."

"This is ransom," said Jin Hua, manager of tongnian.com, a Web site for children. Jin said Baidu has

phoned him twice since December to hawk its search positioning. After Jin refused, he found incoming traffic to his Web site from Baidu fell from 100,000 visitors to 200, while the visitors through Google.com grew to 170,000.

Jin said the placement was an open secret in the Internet industry. "Even if you agree to buy the service, the money will only guarantee a certain number of clicks, and you need to pay more to continue it."

The day after CCTV's program, Baidu issued an apology about the fake medical information and said it was poor oversight in its marketing and sales departments that allowed these Web sites to manipulate its Competitive Rankings service.

A Baidu employee said Competitive Rankings will fix a paid Web site at a certain position in the engine's search results. Unpaid Web sites are still indexed, but their positions fluctuate with each crawl of the web. The employee said paid placements can be identified by a gray mark that says "Promotion" displayed in the lower-right corner of the search result.



Baidu admitted this week it is manipulating its ranking service.

CFP Photo

Beijing Today reporters tested by searching for the word "furniture." Every search result on the first retrieved page was flagged "Promotion," though the mark was not easily noticed.

"There are no rules regulating this area of the market yet," Li Wenge, a lawyer, said. "Baidu's business practice is not illegal according to current Internet Law."

College girls' demise in fire grips country



The death of four college women in a dormitory fire sparked heated debate over college students' safety.

CFP Photo

By Milo Lee

Many college students would still be in dreamland at 6 am, but on November 14 at the Shanghai Business School, it was chaos. A fire erupted in a room on the sixth floor of a girls' dormitory and quickly engulfed the room.

Four residents were trapped inside. In a panic, they rushed out to their balcony, climbed over the railing and clung to it. But before help could come, they lost their grip and fell to their deaths. Two other women who were staying in the room ran out to fetch water to douse the flames and managed to escape.

Police said the malfunction of an electric kettle caused the fire. Kettles, banned in college dormitories, are often secretly used by students to boil water in their rooms.

Authorities suspect the students forgot to unplug their kettle after the electricity was cut off during the night, and when it came back on at 6 am, the kettle automatically turned

on. Overheating of the appliance caused an electrical malfunction which ignited combustible materials in the room, starting the blaze that killed the women.

After the incident, college dormitories nationwide began a crackdown on high-powered electrical appliances that violated safety codes.

Once news of the fire hit the Internet, netizens began asking whether the school had been negligent in the upkeep of its dormitories and whether the students knew how to respond to such an emergency. The victims' families asked to meet with the two survivors, but the request was rejected, and that started rumors that the school was trying to cover up the real cause of the fire.

When local media entered the dormitory after the fire, they found all fire extinguishers were expired and there were no sprinklers in the building. School officials said the exterior of the extinguishers were

replaced only every 10 years, but that the liquid inside was usable according to local fire safety standards.

A student living on the fifth floor of the dormitory said that when the two survivors first noticed there was smoke coming from under their bed, they rushed to the bathroom with basins, but when they came back, their door could not be opened anymore. Questions arose about why they did not rouse the four other girls when they first noticed the fire, and whether they knew how to use the fire extinguishers.

Knowledge of fire prevention and rescue became topics of discussion. Feng Weiguo, an official of the Shanghai Business School, admitted that they had organized classes on personal safety, but that these classes were never held. Many students said they did not take safety education classes seriously and do not have enough knowledge to respond to such emergencies.

Expert view

When it comes to fire safety standards, reality differs from school to school. In order to take in more students, some colleges speed up dorm construction and some students rent off-campus apartments.

These buildings are often put into use without being inspected by the

fire department. Other schools do not install extinguishers or fire sprinklers in dormitories because of budget constraints.

With the rise in student population, janitors lock the dormitories' main gate at night to keep students out of trouble, but this also makes

it hard for students to escape in the case of an emergency.

What happened in Shanghai should be noted by school officials, because life is more valuable than anything else, and this should not be merely a catchphrase.

— Bing Qi, Shanghai scholar

Comment

Pay more attention to safety classes

I think safety education is very important. What happened in Shanghai is heart-breaking: four lives just vanished. In Japan, we have these kinds of classes from kindergarten onwards, because in times of danger, the best person that can help you is yourself.

— Yoko Muraki, Japanese student

Students need more than good grades

Today's education focuses too much on

what's in the textbook, rather than how to use that knowledge. After this tragedy, both parents and the school should rethink what is more important — a perfect test score or practical abilities.

— Zhang Luxia, Outlook magazine reporter

Crowded campus has safety risks

The enrollment in colleges has gone up, but the basic infrastructure on campuses has not kept up with the times.

Many schools spend too much money and energy on building new classrooms or libraries, but overlook the upgrade of dormitories, dining rooms and infrastructure that are closely connected with students' everyday life. As a result, students get stuffed in under-equipped dorms. I think this tragedy is a wake-up call to college officials.

— Gao Fang, professor at Renmin University

Paper tiger faker jailed, but doubts remain

By Huang Daohen

The case of the South China Tiger photo came to an end Monday when the photographer, Shaanxi farmer Zhou Zhenglong, was sentenced to two and a half years in jail with three years' probation.

The Intermediate People's Court of Ankang City in Shaanxi Province fined Zhou 2,000 yuan for fraud and illegally owning 93 military bullets, Xinhua news agency reported.

Zhou, 54, was initially sentenced with no probation in Xunyang County in September, but he appealed the ruling.

Though the case may seem to be over, questions remain because it took eight months for the scandal to break. "Why should Zhou take sole responsibility for the charges?" is the question many observers have asked.

"What I did was wrong, and I could not remember it," Zhou repeatedly said in court Monday, but gave no details on how he forged the photographs. Where did Zhou get the digital camera when digital equipment was still rare in his rural area? Were the photographs manipulated using Adobe Photoshop?

Logic says that if the pictures of the extinct animal were manipulated with the use of a computer, there would be more people involved in the case. A farmer like Zhou would not have the capability to complete the process all on his own.

What is encouraging and inspiring in this case is the persistence of scholars, experts and even ordinary people to unearth the truth about the fake photographs.

The public began doubting whether Zhou's pictures of the tiger were genuine after netizens discovered an old Lunar New Year poster showing a tiger that looked exactly like Zhou's.

Shaanxi's provincial forestry department publicly supported Zhou's discovery by giving him a 20,000-yuan reward. Still the public continued presenting evidence challenging the authenticity of the photos.

For local forestry authorities, the supposed discovery of the extinct South China Tiger meant state investment in a nature reserve for the species. But because the fraud was uncovered, 13 provincial government employees were sacked or reprimanded.



Zhou stood the trial Monday in Shaanxi Province. Xinhua Photo

Chinglish as a cultural heritage

By Zhang Dongya

Travelers in China have gotten used to seeing signs or labels in bad English, which has come to be known all over the world as "Chinglish." Like many visitors, Oliver Lutz Radtke, from Germany, used to take pictures of Chinglish signs to share with family and friends. But he decided to go a step farther – he collected thousands of Chinglish examples, some from other foreigners, and published them last year in a book called *Chinglish*, to preserve what he considers a cultural heritage.

Online museum for Chinglish

Radtke, 31, who majored in Modern Chinese at his country's Heidelberg University, went to Shanghai in 2000 to continue his studies. On the day he arrived, he saw a sign in a cab that said, "Don't Forget to Carry Your Thing." This aroused his interest and started his love affair with Chinglish.

At the beginning, he merely took pictures of Chinglish signs for fun and posted them on his German Web site. But it became a habit and he eventually took his digital camera everywhere to record the misuse of English he encountered.

In 2005, Radtke had collected more than 300 pictures and put up

the Web site Chinglish.de to exhibit the photos, as well as to receive contributions. He received photos from all over the world. "When I found out that more and more signs had been corrected, I realized Chinglish on signboards would disappear one day," Radtke said. "Therefore, I want my site to become a kind of online museum for disappearing Chinglish expressions."

More than a hilarious photo album

Last year, Radtke published *Chinglish: Found in Translation*, which contains 100 Chinglish examples," Radtke said on his Web site.

"I think readers should look at them with a sense of humour, so they can better understand its meaning," he said. "People may be taken by the hilarity of it, but what I tried to express was more than that – Chinglish is a reflection of Chinese humor and wisdom, also a window into Chinese culture and the Chinese way of thinking."

His new book *More Chinglish: Speaking in Tongues*, published under Gibbs Smith in Utah, is due to come out in January. Besides showcasing 100 new Chinglish photographs, Radtke shares more dis-

coveries, such as the factors that lead to the misuse of English in China. The book also includes an interview with a US professor who has done research and taught classes on Chinglish, which discusses the linguistic phenomenon.

Preservation of beauty

Radtke uses the word "complex" to describe his relationship with China. His grandfather, who was an engineer and worked in China in the 1970s, told him many stories about the country as a child. In 1992, Radtke took a Chinese elective while in middle school. "Only five students took the class, so I was one of the first people to learn Chinese," he said. Coincidentally, his father's job partly involved making signboards in Chinese.

Radtke describes Chinglish as "the wonderful result of an English dictionary meeting Chinese grammar." He said it is amazing to understand the Chinese way of thinking through Chinglish signs.

In Radtke's opinion, Chinglish signs in government offices and hospitals should be fixed, but those in public parks should stay the way they are. "Chinese people should be confident enough to keep them. They are beautiful," he said.



Oliver Lutz Radtke

Photo provided by Oliver Lutz Radtke

Noise maker comes to town

By Wang Yu

The three members of the local rock band Carsick Cars must have been nervous Thursday night. Wharton Tiers, who took part in producing many of Sonic Youth's music, will supervise the recording of the local band's second album. And the group found out that Tiers was not only a "guitar noise maker," but a musician with an eclectic taste.

"I don't think there is a line between being a recording engineer and a producer," the 55-years old Tiers said, sitting beside a grand piano in the studio. Tiers, who taught himself music, is a composer, producer and engineer at his Fun City Recording Studio in New

York City. "I first became a lead vocalist when I was in high school, then our drummer left so I filled in the gap. After I moved to New York, the room I rented was too cramped for my drums, so I switched to guitars and keyboards," he said.

Tiers' job at a radio station put him on the path to recording music. "I got a job in radio and learned the basic skills there," he said. "I still keep some of these tape machines with me. Unlike the computers we're using now, music recorded by tape sounds warmer. It also requires you to play well, because you cannot edit samples on a screen."

Sonic Youth, Dinosaur Jr, White Zombie – the names that

dot Tiers's client list are famous for their experimental guitar sound. "I grew up in the late-1960s to the early 1970s. That age of hard rock had a great impact on me and my guitar sound," Tiers said. Since 1982, when he worked with Sonic Youth on their first album, he has created many masterpieces of alternative music.

But not everyone can get used to the noise he makes. "It's understandable. To find the beauty inside fuzz guitar playing, you should open your ears, catch creative moments and be aware of the excitement which your body feels," Tiers said.

But the loud music maker has quieter times too. "Some of my classical music pieces are played

on keyboard. I also learned how to play violin. Classical music is more complex as there are many musical instruments that take part in a symphony," Tiers said. He has put some of his classical music ideas into the Wharton Tiers Ensemble, a band formed in 1997 and which has already released two CDs.

"We have five guitars, a sax, bass and drum in the band, so we have been called a symphonic-surf-ambient-tribal instrumental band for a long time," Tiers said with a smile. "As a musician, I think one should have an open heart and play in front of as many people as possible. You can always learn something new from different people and different music," he added.



Wharton Tiers Photo by Wang Yu

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FDA opens first overseas branch in China

By Jin Zhu

The US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) opened its first overseas office in Beijing on Wednesday, which is aimed at keeping a stringent check on food and drug imports to the US.

The Beijing office is the first of three branches in China, FDA officials said. The other two, in Shanghai and Guangzhou, will open later this week.

"Supervision on food and drugs is a worldwide process. Following the opening of three overseas offices in China, FDA also plans to open one in India next month and two more in Latin America the month after," Mike Leavitt, the US Secretary of Health and Human Services, said at a press conference Tuesday.

According to an FDA statement, in order to share inspection information

and ensure common standards, its three offices in China will work closely with the General Administration of Quality Supervision, Inspection and Quarantine (AQSIQ), the State Food and Drug Administration (SFDA), and the Ministry of Health.

On the domestic front, the Ministry of Health said the country will soon also be sending officials for food and drug quality control to the US. "Although we are two different countries with two different regulatory systems, it is still necessary to guarantee that export products are in line with the importing country's standards," Chen Zhu, the Health Minister, said at the press conference. "The move of dispatching officials between the two countries is based on the principle of equality."

Chen said the work of dispatching

offices will also provide more opportunities for cooperative work and will strengthen mutual understanding and communication between the two countries in the area of food and drug supervision.

The Ministry of Health said the central government is fully prepared to set up a national monitoring network on food production, distribution and consumption. "China is about to initiate all-around monitoring on food safety, especially in the area of food additives. We believe that the three branches in China would offer great help on improving techniques on food supervision," Chen said.

According to the FDA statement, altogether eight members will be dispatched to the Beijing office: an office director, three experts in the fields of food, drug and technique, and four regular censors.

EC-China sign food safety memorandum

By Han Manman

The European Commission (EC) signed Tuesday a renewed and extended Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with China that will strengthen cooperation on safety controls across the board - in product safety as well as in the fields of food, sanitary and phytosanitary issues.

The MoU was signed by EC commissioners Meglena Kuneva and Androulla Vassiliou, and by the vice-minister of the General Administration of Quality Supervision, Inspection and Quarantine (AQSIQ), Wei Chuanzhong.

The document, first inked in 2006, upgrades the existing RAPEX-China system (Rapid Alert System for dangerous goods) to include obligations for quarterly reporting on enforcement actions to track down dangerous goods.

The upgraded MoU will provide China, for the first time, with immediate access to the EU's Rapid Alert System for Feed and Food, and, in particular, to the system's notifications that concern China. It also provides for new joint enforcement action on sensitive product areas and formalizes many of the existing technical working groups and administrative controls which have been put in place to allow the RAPEX-China system to meet new challenges.

"Product safety is the foundation of consumer confidence. This is particularly true for food products as severe dangers to human and animal health can emerge from such products," said Vassiliou, Health Commissioner for the EC.

"We need to be vigilant and tackle such potential threats at an early stage," she said. The EC "has been a pioneer in this respect. It will continue to do its utmost to ensure that citizens feel safe with the food they consume."

Kuneva, who is EC Consumers Commissioner, said, "There can be no compromise on safety. We see every week in our Rapid Alert System recalls of dangerous consumer goods that can cause serious injury. This Memorandum substantially strengthens the systems of safety controls for product and food safety between the EU and China."

"It provides for more transparency, better monitoring and new possibilities for joint surveillance controls. It is a step in the right direction, but our message is very clear: there is no room for complacency. European citizens want value for money and choice on the market, but never at the expense of safety," she said.

US Secretary of Labor discusses US-Sino economic ties

By Jackie Zhang

Elaine Chao, the US Secretary of Labor and the first Asian-American woman in the country's history to be appointed to the Cabinet, spoke at Tsinghua University Tuesday evening. With the global financial crisis her main concern, Chao talked about US-Sino economic ties and the role played by her department.

Chao said economic ties between China and the US have never been as close as they are now. "China, now, is our second largest trade partner in the world. In the first eight months of this year, bilateral trade amounted to US \$267 billion," she said.

She voiced optimism on the US economy's prospects. "Due to problems in the US housing market, and the bogging down of the financial and credit markets, the country is facing temporary challenges. But the government has adopted several active and decisive measures to handle the problems," Chao said. "We financed US \$700 billion to alleviate the situation, to help banks and the financial markets make a turnover... The economy will recover and more working opportunities will be created."

Chao said the Department of Labor played an important role in developing closer economic ties between China and the US. In 2006, Chinese President Hu Jintao and US President George W Bush established the US-China Strategic Economy Dialogue (SED), which created a regular forum for the two countries to discuss economic issues.

Chao also talked about the personal challenges she has encountered in her career. She moved with her family to the US from China at age eight, and spoke not even a word of English. But she studied hard and established a successful career. "Although we left our own culture, my parents asked my sisters and me to celebrate traditional Chinese festivals. They encouraged us. The success of my sisters and myself should be attributed to our parents."

Chao said that Westerners and Asians do have different mindsets in dealing with the world. "We cannot say which one is better. In dealing with the world economy, each way of thinking has its advantages. But misunderstandings come up because we have different ways of looking at the world. That is why we need more interaction and communication," she said.

Ashes of Stuart buried in China



US Ambassador to China Clark T Randt stands in front of John Leighton Stuart's tombstone in Hangzhou. IC Photo

The ashes of John Leighton Stuart, the last US ambassador to China before the founding of the People's Republic in 1949, were buried Monday in Hangzhou, decades after his death in 1962.

Several Chinese and American officials, including US Ambassador to China Clark T Randt Jr, attended the interment. Stuart's name was written in English and Chinese on a black marble headstone.

Stuart, a US citizen, was born in Hangzhou in 1876 and returned to the US 11 years later for school. He went back to China in 1904 and traveled around the country as a missionary.

In 1919, he became the first president of Yauching University, now Peking University, which under his 27 years' guidance became one of China's most prestigious universities.

He was appointed US Ambassador to China in 1946, and left the country in 1949. He died in the US in 1962.

Stuart was a fluent Chinese speaker, who was also an honorary citizen of Hangzhou. According to the Associated Press, Stuart saw himself as "more Chinese than American." In his will, Stuart asked that his ashes be buried in China.

(By Han Manman)

UN calls on China to spend more on public services

By Huang Daoheng

The United Nations Development Program released its latest report on human development in China, calling on the economic giant to further develop education, health care and social welfare for its 1.3 billion people.

The fruits of China's rapid economic growth over the past decades have not been equally distributed, and the disparities limit continued expansion, according to the China Human Development Report 2008. While Beijing and Shanghai have reached the development level of countries such as Cyprus and Portugal, provinces such as Guizhou are comparable to Namibia or Botswana, it said.

Improving public services like health care will support a shift to consumption-led growth

and sustain economic expansion in the face of the global slowdown, the UN said.

"You have an opportunity here of doing the right thing, and also of helping the financial crisis," Khalid Malik, UN resident coordinator in China, said. "If you can increase spending on health, education, social security, this would also help in maintaining the growth rates."

The report noted that investment in public services may produce better results. Every yuan rise in spending on rural education, for example, yields 8.43 yuan in added farm and livestock production, compared with a 6.75 yuan boost from infrastructure, it said.

The report also said that the country's Human Development Index (HDI) has rapidly increased in the past three decades.

The HDI in China, which measures health, knowledge and income, climbed from 101 to 81 in the global rankings between 1990 and 2005, the report said.

Achievements aside, challenges remain, said Zhao Baige, vice minister of the China Population and Family Planning Commission. Life expectancy in southwestern Guizhou Province is a decade shorter than in Beijing; child mortality in northwestern Qinghai Province is seven times as high as in the capital; and illiteracy in Gansu Province, also in the northwest, is five times higher than the national average, according to the report.

One of China's key tasks in the future is to develop access-for-all public services, along with narrowing and wiping out gaps in living standards, Zhao said.

Vegan-concept picking up

Because of environmental, animal and health issues, an increasing number of locals and foreigners are turning away from meat products and going vegetarian or vegan.

By Annie Wei

Five people showed up at Jian-wai Soho's Vegan Hut restaurant last Friday for the weekly meeting of the Vegan Social Club (VSC), the only expat vegan club in town.

Yi Tong, 29, a writer, has been a vegan for over a year. It was her first time to join the gathering. Patricia Cobena, 25, a Spanish teacher, went vegetarian as a young girl because she felt that eating meat was cruel to animals. She dines at the restaurant a few times a week and joins club events occasionally. Sofie Kruse, 25, a PhD student from Denmark who is new in town, found out about VSC online.

Joining a group like the VSC is helpful to vegans who want a support group. "People might feel lonely being the only vegan in his or her group of friends," Yi said. The club is also a place to get more information about maintaining a vegan's lifestyle. About 70 percent of its members are foreigners.

The Vegan Social Club

Christopher Barden, 41, a script writer from the US and the founder of VSC, said he did not mind if few people showed up at their meetings. It did not matter if the group was small as long as it met regularly, and that it provided people a "vegan-friendly" space, he said.

Barden said the club was formed to bring together vegans, and as a channel to share knowledge on veganism, a term that still confuses many people. Vegetarians are people who forgo meat, but still eat eggs and milk; vegans are opposed to consuming any product derived from animals.

Like a lot of vegans from the West, Barden became one because of his concern for animals. Vegans believe that butchering animals for food is unnecessary. On top of this, a growing number of studies show that a vegan diet is healthier than a non-vegan diet.

"I thought it would be cool to have a real, really low-key, informal, regular event at a restaurant," Barden said. The club had its first gathering last Thanksgiving, and through the encouragement of supporters, VSC began meeting Thursday nights at the Jingsi Vegetarian Restaurant.

Since October, it added the Vegan Hut meetings to its lineup of events. A year after it was organized, the club has 160 people on its mailing list and a group of a few dozen that regularly shows up at its events.

Vegetarianism in China

Yu Li, 39, who owns Vegan Hut, became a vegetarian 19 years ago for spiritual reasons. But he did not know about veganism until he went to the US as a scholar in 1999. Out of curiosity, he worked for three months as a part-time waiter at a vegan restaurant.

He became a vegan two years ago due to urgent globe warming issues because research suggests that a vegan diet could be very helpful to lessen those issues, Yu said, which was also his first initiative to open the first vegan restaurant in China.

"Compared to the Western world, vegan culture is a new development in China," he said.

In the US, the book *Diet for a New America* by John Robbins, published in 1987, is considered the "bible" for vegans in the country. It revealed the relationship between diet, physical health, animal cruelty and environmentalism, and influenced many people to become vegan.

With the release of more studies on the relationship between the environment, health, diet and animal care, turning vegan has become trendy, especially among celebrities in Europe and the US.

For a long time, vegetarians in China were mainly Buddhists. But their diet differed from Western vegetarians in that they did not eat scallions, garlic or leeks, in accordance with Buddhist tradition. Each Chinese city might have had one or two popular vegetarian restaurants and non-Buddhists would go there once a year for an alternative dining experience. Some extravagant restaurants incorporated vegetarianism into their dishes by decorating them with flowers formed from vegetables or making fake meat from tofu.

In the early 1990s, Taiwanese brand Qishan introduced imitation meat dishes into the mainstream Chinese market. It sold "fake" fish, chicken, duck and



Vegetarian and vegans called on people to eat more vegetables, drive hybrid cars, plant trees and use recycled energy to protect the environment at China International Environment Protection Exhibition 2008 in Dalian, Liaoning Province.

CFP Photos

ham, marketing them as *sushi*, or vegetarian in Chinese.

The Beijing scene

Becoming a vegan in Beijing is now easy, unlike in the past when people did so only for religious reasons.

There are many vegetarian or vegan organizations in town, like the Beijing University Vegan Culture Association, which teamed up with 15 universities in the country to organize so far, three vegan festivals in the capital.

"It's going to get a lot easier in the future," Barden said. In recent years, the number of vegetarian and vegan restaurants shot up to at least 40. Meanwhile, more and more western restaurants are offering vegetarian menus: apart from the staple vegetable and fruit salads, there are now vegetarian pizzas and vegetarian burgers.

"But most vegetarian restaurants are at the corner of a hutong," Yu said, "and their prices are expensive." That makes them unaffordable to a majority of people. The most successful vegetarian restaurant appears to be Pure Lotus, whose carefully prepared food and wonderful ambiance get customers to fork out a lot of money for a small

portion of vegetables.

Vegan customers

Vegan Hut has four main types of customers, Yu said: college students who are eager to try new things, white-collar workers who are concerned about their health and well-being, expats who want to experience the variety of food the city has to offer and Buddhists.

"Seventy percent of diners here are young females, and 30 percent of diners are expats," Yu said.

Yu said some of his friends quit eating meat products after they became dog owners and saw how their pets suffered from illnesses.

Yi Tong, the female writer, said she became a vegan for health reasons. "My skin used to be really bad. I spent a whole year seeing various doctors of Traditional Chinese Medicine and spent over 10,000 yuan. But the situation only improved when I changed my diet," she said.

Vegan activities to come

A leading local Chinese newspaper once sponsored an environmental campaign on site calling on the public to share tips on how to be environmentally friendly in day-to-day life. Yu said he participated in the program, telling people that eating more vegetables and less meat would help the environment.

The program hosts and the other guests, however, thought his suggestions ridiculous, he said.

When Yu established Vegan Hut, he created a slogan encouraging customers to "start from eating only vegetables once a week," for Vegan Hut. The restaurant also plans to sponsor lectures about why being a vegan helps the environment, which is different from VSC's focus of concern for animals.

Apart from meeting at restaurants, VSC also organizes potlucks. "We have Jari farewell parties," Barden said, referring to a member who keeps leaving China. "Jari, aka 'the traveling vegan,' keeps leaving China. So we started an absurdist tradition of doing regular Jari farewell potlucks. Technically, Jari does not even have to be in the country. As long as he is somewhere and is 'leaving' that somewhere, we will do it," he said.

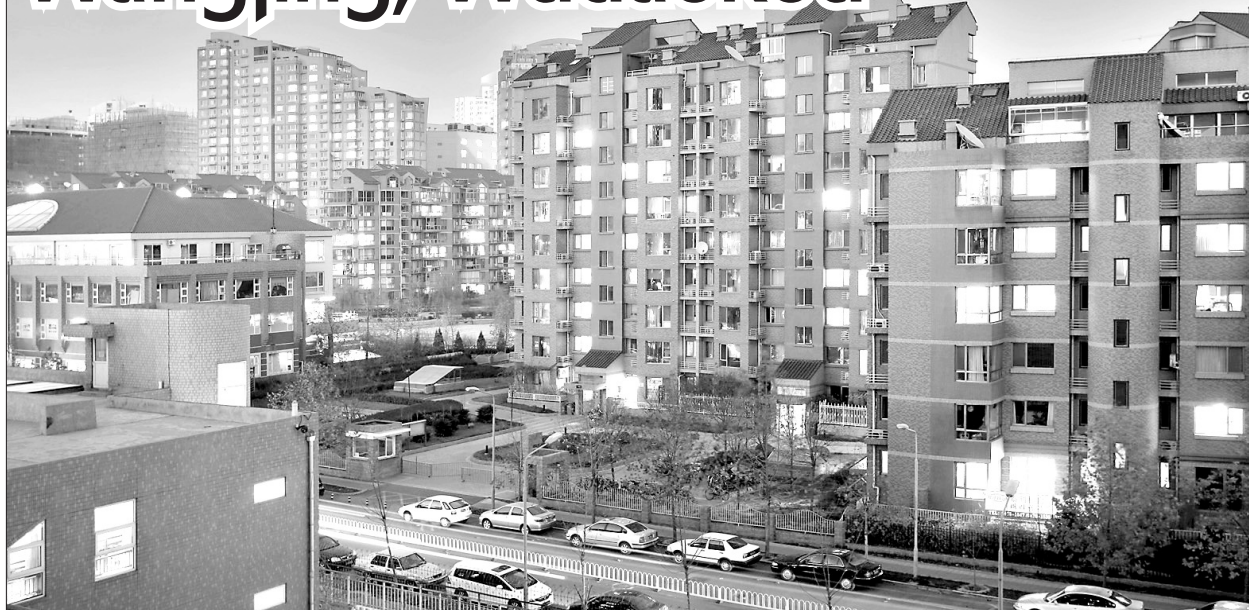
VSC members also support other vegan or animal advocacy groups, like the one named Don't Eat Friends.

"More Chinese people can now accept the idea of eating more vegetables and less meat, but it's still taking time for them to accept the concept of being a vegetarian or vegan," Yu said.



Beijing Buddhism association wants to promote the 16th of each month as "vegetarian or vegan day."

Rental fees go down in Wangjing, Wudaokou



Wangjing has many new residential compounds, offering cozy apartments.

CFP Photo

By Venus Lee

Housing rental fees in Wangjing, in northeast Beijing and Wudaokou, Haidian District, areas popular among foreign students and office workers have fallen in recent months. "The rental fee in Wangjing fell by 10 to 14 percent in the last two months. It also dropped 10 percent in the Wudaokou area," Li Jing, manager of Woaiwojia (515j), a real estate company, said.

Many South Koreans, one of the largest groups of foreigners in the city, have terminated their contracts due to the depreciation of the Korean Won, which has made the local cost of living burdensome. The shrinkage of client volume has resulted in a drop in prices within the rental market.

"The cost of mid-sized housing units in

Wangjing has dropped 300 to 600 yuan, while that of large-sized units dropped by as much as 1,000 yuan," Luan Bo, an employee at Lianjia Real Estate Company, said.

The most affected communities in Wangjing are the New City, Xiaduiyuan, and Atlantic Place or Daxiyang Xincheng. In the past two weeks, rental in these places dropped an average of 500 yuan, according to 515j. In Xiaduiyuan, a one-room flat now goes for 3,000 yuan a month, down from 3,600 yuan four months ago.

Nevertheless, Wangjing still remains a popular residential area for foreigners, especially South Koreans and Japanese, because of its modern housing, recreation, education and medical treatment facilities, and its proximity to the business district.

It also has an electronics and industrial

park, which has made it an ideal place for mid-to-top-level executives to invest in real estate. "The living and entertainment facilities in the area are complete, and it's convenient and fast to get to airport and Yayuncun. So I prefer to live here," Keun Jim Min, a South Korean businessman, said.

"Wangjing has great potential to grow in value. Over 30 of the world's top 500 companies have purchased land here. Enterprises such as Motorola, Ericsson and LG have entered the area, and supermarkets like Wal-Mart, Carrefour and other shopping malls have built shopping and leisure centers here," Liu Lei, a real estate investment consultant, said. "But what is most important is that the prices of houses and apartments here are lower than those of the CBD area."

Winter shelter for beggars opened

In order to prevent beggars from freezing out in the cold, the Municipal Social Assistance Center began giving shelter to street dwellers yesterday.

With the onset of winter, the temperature at night has dropped to -4. The center's staff members in Xuanwu and Fengtai have

been making the rounds in their districts, taking beggars to rescue stations where they can spend the night.

To report beggars that need shelter at night, please call the following numbers:

Dongcheng District: 6404 3861; Xicheng District: 66178 612 or 6617 6518;

Chongwen District: 67160 805 or 6716 5292; Xuanwu District: 6346 4201 or 6332 9190; Chaoyang District: 8439 4991; Haidian District: 8277 4128 or 8277 4171; Fengtai District: 8388 4107; Shijingshan District: 8895 0502 or 8895 0503.

(By Venus Lee)

ASK Beijing Today

Email your questions to: weiying@ynet.com

Yesterday, I went to the railway station to get tickets but was told to come back five days later because they were not yet available. I thought tickets could be sold 10 days in advance.

Normally, train tickets are sold 10 days in advance. But beginning this week until December 16, trains whose numbers start with the letters K or T will only be available five days ahead. For instance, if you want to buy train tickets for November 25, you can only get them after 7 pm on November 20. According to the Beijing Railway Station, the months of November and December each year are the busiest for transporting soldiers around the country, hence the temporary change in schedule for ticket sales.

Where can I get cosplay or anime merchandise and clothes online?

Check out cosplay8.cn or search for "cosplay" on Taobao.com, China's version of eBay.

I'm visiting Beijing for a few days and would like to buy quality pearls, amber, coral and turquoise. I'm buying for myself and not for business.

Most people find good deals at Hongqiao market, whether for personal use or for business. They are also available on the top floor of Yashou or the Silk Market. But remember to bargain hard.

Hongqiao market

16 Hongqiao Lu (opposite the East Gate of the Temple of Heaven), Chongwen District

Yashou

58 Gongti Bei Lu, Chaoyang District

Silk Market

8 Xiushui Dong Jie, Chaoyang District

Where can I get a Googlephone in Beijing and how much will it cost?

You can look for dealers in Zhongguancun, the city's main electronics shopping district, but note that there are few authorized local dealers. The price of a Googlephone is about 3,799 yuan. Chinese digital experts suggest people wait a bit longer before buying it. First, it needs to be "decoded" before it can be used in China. Second, software to support the phone is still limited worldwide.

(By Wei Ying)

BEIJING TODAY

serving the expat community

An English weekly

Expat News

Stories of the city's expats

Community

Building a harmonious international society

Commerce & Consulates

Promoting unity between all peoples

News U can use

Helping each other, progressing together

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Life as a flower

When Chinese ink meets digital photography

By Li Jing
 “Man
 Chinese-
 Zhang
 the island
 In 20
 October,

Experience with Hong Kong golden film industry

Born in Shanghai, Zhang grew up in Macau and Hong Kong. She obtained her bachelor of science degree at George Washington University in the US. It was not long before her passion for art brought her back to the campus. She enrolled in New York University and went on to become the school's first Chinese woman to earn a master of fine arts degree in film and television.

With her lingual and academic background, she returned to Hong Kong to become one of its first filmmakers to have studied abroad.

Zhang worked with top actors and directors of the time such as Ringo Lam, Chow Yun Fat and Jackie Chan. Her *City on Fire* won Ringo Lam his first Best Director award and lead actor Chow Yun Fat his first appearance at the Hong Kong film awards. *City on Fire* and Zhang's *Prison on Fire* are still chosen to represent Hong Kong in many film festivals. Both are available for rent or purchase throughout the US and Europe.

A decade ago, most Hong Kong films were still made in studios with artificial props to avoid tedious negotiations with the colonial government that accompany any request to rent a film location. However, filming at real locations was the norm in Western film.

"I negotiated with the local government and persuaded it to lend some film locations using my English and clear, systematic plans," Zhang said. Her efforts made it possible to film Jackie Chan's *Project A* in a colonial government camp. Since then, the use of real sets has been gradually accepted by filmmakers and the local government.

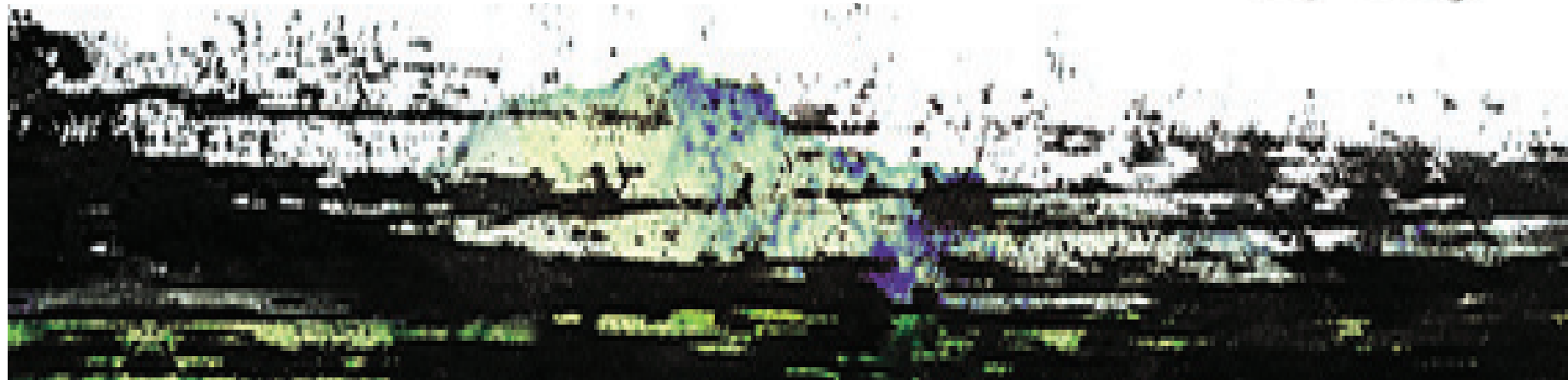
"I was young and energetic. I worked with Ga Jan Cheung, now better known as the producer of *Red Cliff*, in Golden Harvest. It gave us enough room to experience and experiment with fresh ideas," she said.

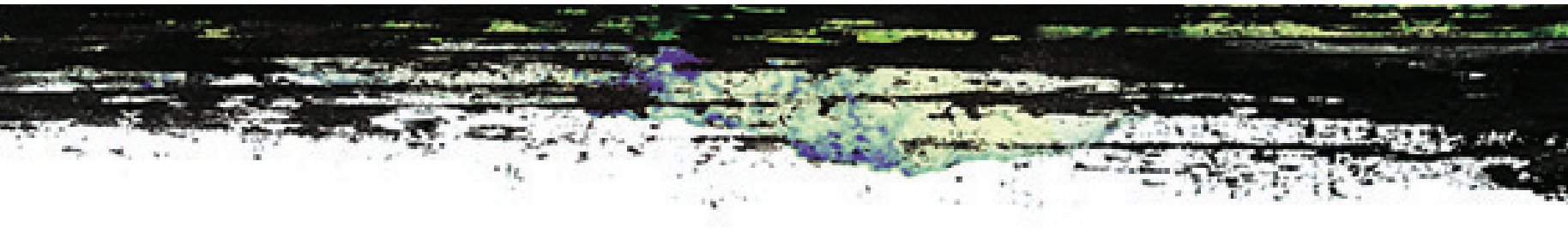
West and East mediums

While working as a film producer, Zhang began to develop an interest in Eastern art and philosophy.

She studied Chinese ink painting once a week with 86-year-old Professor Zhao Shao-ang, known internationally for his flower and bird brush paintings. Under Zhao's tutelage, she gained insight into the finesse, harmony and depth of ink painting and learned from a real master's artistic and life insights. Her appreciation for flowers led her to study ikebana, the Japanese art of flower arrangement.

Armed with a knowledge of ink painting and ikebana, Zhang began to experiment by combining both with photography. "I always liked photography. It was my passion. I wanted to fix different artistic mediums. Only





“For my people at my age are retired, but I want to keep working and learning until my last moment,” Catherine Si Jin Zhang, a contemporary American artist, said.

Zhang’s career is rooted in the golden era of Hong Kong cinema. She produced 15 feature-length movies and directed several TV episodes in the industry. By the late 1990s, she left her mark on the art world by fusing photography and Chinese ink with a focus on flowers. In 2006, the Getty Research Institute installed her photograph “A Passage in Life” as a permanent display in its rare book collection. Last year, she was featured as the Hong Kong Cancer Fund’s Pink Revolution Event’s sole artist.



Through photography, Zhang demonstrates the chemical changes and features of brush painting.



Using digital imaging techniques, Zhang combines brush painting and photography.

Photos provided by Catherine Si Jin Zhang

by using digital imaging techniques can you combine two mediums on the same platform,” she said. However, digital technology of the time was limited and “it was hard to demonstrate the chemical changes and features of brush painting through photography.”

By the end of the decade, she returned to the US to start a new journey in studying photography. For the past 10 years, Zhang has worked to realize her unique fusion of photography and Chinese ink painting with a focus on flowers.

In 2004, she started her real practice. “The main challenge was how to balance the photography and ink brush painting. Neither could be allowed to flow over or overwhelm the other,” she said.

Her multimedia work transcends the limits of brush and camera to bring out the aesthetic beauty of both East and West. Within each image, the juxtaposition of traditional ink paintings against the latest digital techniques and printing methods creates a new dimension of possibility and beauty.

“A Passage in Life”

While Zhang has declared photography her lifelong passion, it was one she could never pursue until she already had a teenage daughter.

Zhang enrolled in the Art Center College of Design in Pasadena, California. Her years in Pasadena were filled with creativity, knowledge and challenges. But that study came with a price: a crunched four hours of sleep per day.

By her third semester, Zhang collapsed with what doctors would term a “terminal illness,” forcing her to take the next half-year off before continuing her degree.

Her mental and emotional state as she swung between sickness and health was an inspiration for *A Passage in Life*, her book. *Passage* conveys Zhang’s interpretation of the meaning of life. “The flower was me, and I was the flower. I used the flower to share with my audience the experience of having a terminal illness,” she said.

In 2006, the Research Library of Getty Research Institute, accepted *A Passage in Life* for permanent display in its rare book collection. The institute said the unique photography book, which described the journey of life through flowers, would engage viewers and stir up their past experience or imaginations.

“The book is stored carefully at the museum in a controlled temperature. To me, every work is my baby, and I’m content to see them find a home,” Zhang said.

She said she hopes the book would be published soon so other people who suffer from illness can find strength in its pages.

Flowers Ink Brush Painting and Photography solo exhibition

Where: Beijing Wan Fung Art Gallery
When: Until November 25, daily except Monday 10 am – 5 pm
Admission: Free
Tel: 6523 3319



Capturing the face of China

By Annie Wei

Thomas Antoni Carter, 35, a freelance photojournalist from San Francisco, US, recently published his first book.

Instead of similar photo books, *China: Portrait of a People* (published by Blacksmith Books, 635 pages, 280 yuan) is a more portable volume. Rather than focus on geographic, landscape or sight-seeing photos, Carter focuses on the distinct features and lifestyles that define the nation's 56 ethnic groups collected in 33 provinces. **Beijing Today (BT): How did you communicate with locals when you asked to photograph them?**

Thomas Antoni Carter (TC): The first year across China was my solo backpacking expedition across the 33 provinces, which was my own personal discovery of China as a country. I forced myself into absolute immersion by traveling and interacting with the local populace of each province. Speaking only a semblance of the language, I relied just as much on warm gestures and smiles as I did my broken Putonghua to make friends and take snapshots. My second trip across China was accompanied by my Chinese girlfriend Hong Mei, who also worked as translator. This trip was more cultural-centric, and with her help I found a more intimate understanding of the lives of the people I was photographing. On both journeys, I usually first made friends with people, then a photograph followed as a mere afterthought. For the candid shots, it took deft skill to capture the precious moment without being noticed – not easy for a foreigner in China. Of course, many times I wasn't so blessed. For the Hunan riot photos on pages 380-381, for example, I was confronted by local police who said they would incarcerate me indefinitely if I didn't delete those pictures.

BT: Did you have a feeling of superiority when you first came to China and took photos of people in rural areas? How did Chinese people in less developed areas regard a foreign photographer?

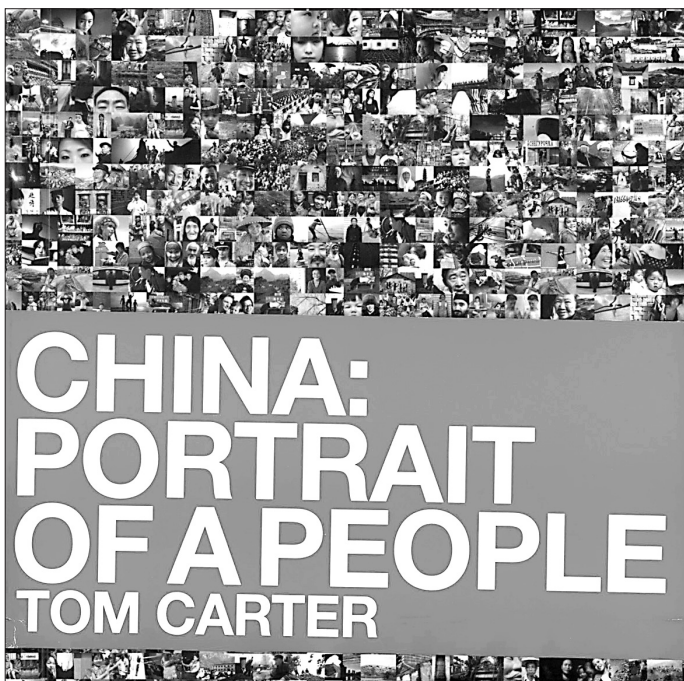
TC: Superiority is something I can honestly say I never felt while I was in China. I lived a very humble existence – from sleeping in *luguang* (small inn) to eating street food and hitchhiking. I often caught peasants looking at me sympathetically. I remember one girl I met on a train said, "Before I met you I used to think all Americans were rich and dressed nicely." I laughed, but it's true – I'm the same as a migrant peasant worker: I make very little money, and I'm always away from home trying to find jobs. I'm a *nongmin* (peasant) with a camera!

BT: Among all these 800 photos, are there any you like the most?

TC: It's really an impossible question to answer, because every photo has a special memory attached to it. The 800 photos that appear in the book were whittled down from thousands, so mathematically speaking, every image in the book is my favorite. But I do really love the panoramic photo on page 488-489 of all the unemployed workers in Yinchuan, Ningxia. Those guys stand there on the street corner every day waiting for menial labor that may or may not come. You can see the hardship in each of their faces, but at the same time, at that moment they are so happy and curious to be interacting with me; it's a really touching photo.

BT: Some photos seem to be explained, like the beggar family photo and the one of burned workers in Beijing. Others are not, like the one of farmers in Anhui Province. Did you omit captions to avoid leading the readers' judgment?

TC: I chose not to completely narrate the book because I want the photos to tell their own stories and lead armchair travelers on their own private journey across China. But some pages required an explanation either because they would have left the reader confused – such as translating the sign written by the "beggar" family – or because the story was too important to leave out – such as the burned worker. On the other hand, I have so many anecdotes from my adventures across China that I am considering publishing another book, sans illustrations, for those who prefer a good read to looking at pictures.



Tracing an artistic lineage

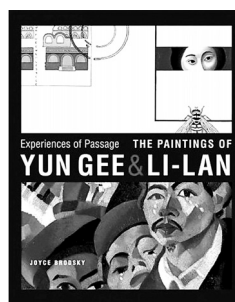
By He Jianwei

The father was an emigrant from China to the US. The daughter is a Chinese American. Both are cosmopolitan and transnational artists. Joyce Brodsky, a critic and professor emerita of art and theory at the University of California, Santa Cruz illustrated the father and daughter's life and paintings in her book *Experiences of Passage* (227pp, University of Washington Press, US \$40).

The father Yun Gee (1906-1963) was born in China, and emigrated to San Francisco as a young man. After living both there and in Paris, he settled in New York City for the latter part of his life. The daughter Li-lan was born in New York to Yun Gee and Helen Wimmer Gee. Both the father and daughter exemplify the desire to live and work without the restrictions of national identity, a choice that permits openness to different cultures.

"For Yun Gee and Li-lan, their openness was never a reflection of artistic trends, but an element of life itself," Brodsky said. Brodsky was born in the US, of Russian and Polish heritage. She is fascinated by people who have a cross-cultural background.

"In 1979, I first saw Yun Gee's painting at an exhibition, and then I met the Li-lan and her mother. Yun Gee's paintings

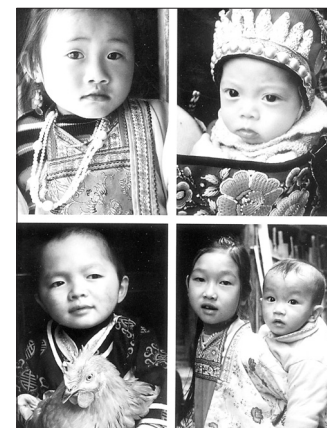


left a great impression on me. His subjects were typical Chinese choices. For example, he painted a farewell to his motherland, but in cubism," she said.

She interviewed Li-lan and her mother, knowing that Yun Gee was different from other artists of his time. "Most Chinese artists in America maintain their style and don't absorb many Western techniques in their painting, but Yun Gee broke all the restriction of his traditional skills," she said.

The book, although not theoretical, is founded on ideas of trans-nationalism and cosmopolitanism. As artists who have embraced multinational, multi-cultural and multiracial experiences, Yun Gee and Li-lan have combined those experiences intrinsically, sometimes in spite of the pain that such a complex passage may entail. Li-lan was exposed to Yun Gee's paintings and his cultural sophistication when she was a child, and this exposure was crucial to her artistic being.

"*Experiences of Passage* represents an ambitious effort to trace the complex processes of transnational movement, cross-cultural identifications, and mixing through the work of Yun Gee and Li-lan," Margo Machida, a professor from the University of Connecticut, said.

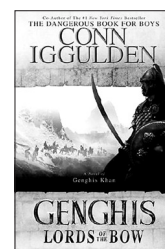


CNPIEC Bookstore booklisting

The China National Publication Import and Export Corporation's (CNPIEC) bookstore recommends the following new arrivals to *Beijing Today* readers.

Lords of the Bow

By Conn Iggulden, 400 pp, Delacorte Press, 90 yuan

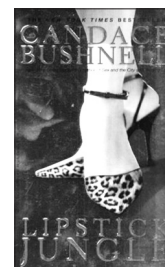


This story follows the mighty Mongol conqueror Genghis Khan who set out to unify a continent under his

rule. Genghis leads his warriors across the Gobi Desert and into a realm his people have never seen before. Laying siege to one fortress after another, Genghis calls upon his cunning and imagination to crush each enemy in a different way. In the city of Yenking – modern-day Beijing – the Chin make their final stand. But Genghis strikes with breathtaking audacity, never ceasing until the Emperor himself is forced to kneel.

Lipstick Jungle

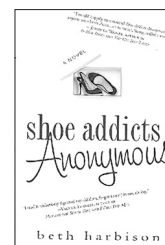
By Candace Bushnell, 544 pp, Hyperion, 90 yuan



In 21st Century New York, Nico O'Neilly, Wendy Healy and Victory Ford – three of "New York's 50 Most Powerful Women" – will do anything to get ahead. This includes jeopardizing their personal and professional relationships. Nico, editor-in-chief of Bonfire magazine, betrays her boss to rise to the top of the division at media mega-giant Splash-Verner.

Shoe Addicts Anonymous

By Beth Harbison, 352 pp, St. Martin's Griffin, 90 yuan



Three very different women are brought together by a shared passion: shoes. They meet once a week to trade Manolos and Maglis, but soon rely on each other for much more. They're joined by Joss, a young nanny, who does not care about shoes but needs a place to avoid her demanding boss. The four become fast friends, trusted advisors and eventually business partners.

(By Zhang Dongya)



Back to Hakka basics



Delicious Perch Wrapped in Foil

A whistle-stop

Kejia Xiaozhen, which means Hakka whistle-stop, counts businesspeople, diplomats and stars as its regular customers. "Even the Kejia cooks who work for nearby hotels have dinner here when they are off duty," said Qi Chonglin, who opened the restaurant eight years ago when a Hakka cook became his son-in-law.

The most famous dish is the *Zhibauluyu* or the Delicious Perch Wrapped in Foil (48 yuan). This is a fish dish with Southeast Asian flavoring, but prepared using traditional Hakka cooking methods. The fish is cured, then braised, and afterwards, coated in a sauce made of a dozen spices, said Yang Guang, the restaurant manager. Finally,

the meat is wrapped in foil and cooked on an iron plate. The fish skin comes out crispy and the flavoring permeates the meat.

The *Sanbeiya* or Three Cup Duck, which uses a cup of sugar, a cup of beer and a cup of soy sauce, is another hit among customers, Yang said.

Nanheyen Kejia Town

Where: 103 Nanheyen Dajie, Dongcheng District

Open: 10:30 am – midnight

Tel: 6522 8993

Hepingli Kejia Town

Where: Dongjie Nankou, Heping Li, Dongcheng District

Open: 10:30 am – midnight

Tel: 8421 4136

By Zheng Lu

The Kejia people, or "Hakka" in their own dialect, live in southern China, although their ancestors are from the north. They are a nomadic group of Han people that migrated from the Yellow River to southern China over thousands of years. "Kejia" means guest, and the name used by this group to differentiate itself from the locals they encountered. Because of the Hakka people's distinctive history and lifestyle, their cuisine is characterized by a fusion of northern and southern cooking styles. These Hakka restaurants are famous for their traditional dishes.



Brewed tofu

Photos by Zheng Lu

A cottage in the city

Shuitian, which means water and farmland in Chinese, is a typical image of a Hakka community, and this is where the restaurant got its name.

The first thing you notice when you enter is a pavilion made of grass – a structure that seems out of place in an urban jungle like Beijing.

There are big tables and wooden chairs to match the setting, but also tables paired with leather chairs suitable for couples wanting to cozy up to each other. A little attic makes up the rest of the space and completes the feel of a warm village cottage.

Shuitian's Hakka food is light and simple, and its representative dish is brewed tofu (22 yuan). The dish is served on a hot plate, from which the sauce bubbles wafting its

aroma through the room. There's a saying about the dish that goes, "The smell of brewed tofu being cooked in one house will spread to ten other houses." "The tofu is stuffed with minced meat made up of pork, fish and shrimp, then it is fried and braised in an earthen pot", Nie Rongrong, the restaurant owner, said.

Nie opened the restaurant because her husband is Hakka, and was picky with food. The restaurant satisfied his appetite, while it fulfilled her longing for a more idyllic and relaxing place.

Shuitian

Where: 12, Dewai Dajie, Chaoyang District

Open: 10:30 am – 10:30 pm

Tel: 8208 8013



Kill time with amusing,



By Wang Yu

At the end of a long day, some people turn to technology and games like the Sony PlayStation to relax. While gamers may have forgotten about the simpler things in life that can bring happiness, some inventors have not. Inspired by little moments of living, they have come up with fun that is simple, but definitely not dull!

Most of these products are rarely found in shops around town, but they are easily available online. Ixiqi, found on an online store at <http://shop35301920.taobao.com/>, sells gadgets reviewed on Joey Zhou's blog of the same name.

"I started my blog in the summer of 2007 to share my collection with other people. I never imagined my blog would attract such a huge following. Anyway, I quit my job, concentrated on Ixiqi.com and started selling things on the Internet," Zhou, who used to be an IT professional, said.

useless inventions

Japan comes up with some of the world's wackiest though useless inventions. PutiPuti, Edamame and PeriPeri made by Bandai embody the best of Japanese toys: they keep owners playing for hours without feeling an ounce of weariness.



PutiPuti

Popping sheets of Bubble Wrap may be one of the greatest human pastimes. The crisp sound of each cell bursting brings unimaginable joy and relief. This plastic box with eight buttons, designed in cooperation with the makers of Bubble Wrap, imitates the sound made when the cushioning material is popped. Once 100 pops are reached, the box will emit a special sound, such as a dog barking, a person passing gas or a woman talking seductively.

Price: 79 yuan

Tuttuki Bako

This is a little box with a screen on it, similar to Cube World by Sega. When you insert a finger into the hole located on the right side of the gadget, the screen will display a digital picture of your finger. The finger's movement will activate Tuttuki Bako and you will be able to play with a panda which will show up on screen. By changing modes, users can explore the sea, touch the face of a person programmed into the game or transform the box into a clock.

Price: 210 yuan



PeriPeri

This keychain-sized object, perfect as a cell phone accessory, recreates the sound and sensation of tearing open the perforated line on a paper envelope. Powered by a pair of LR44 button batteries, PeriPeri can also give out a cat's meow. The toy will debut in Japan on November 20 and soon after will be available on Ixiqi's store.

Price: 77 yuan



Edamame

This toy is an imitation of Edamame, an appetizer comprised of boiled soybeans and a popular appetizer in Japan and China. Shaped like a pod, the middle bean can be popped out of the shell to reveal one of 12 faces hidden inside. Edamame uses no batteries or computer chips, just basic machinery: an elastic string pulls beans back into the pod. The manufacturer claims the popping action will create a tingling sensation in a person's nervous system.

Price: 77 yuan

Tengo

Designed by British artist Crispin Jones, Tengo is a USB-powered character that lights up and lip syncs to music, your voice or whatever sound there is. The character's facial expression changes to match the sound. A stand-alone device which requires no computer software, just connect Tengo to your computer, blow on its face and it will respond with a weird smile.

Price: 468 yuan



Tricks to make every yuan count



By Jin Zhu

The collapse of the global stock markets, falling salaries and other financial pressures have Chinese office workers changing their spending habits.

Many are turning to the Internet and its limitless supply of free samples to supplement their normal shopping. Others are swapping their way up to products they really want in a cyber barter system or charting their expenses to save money.

Sifting through samples

By registering their personal information with a free sample distributor online, consumers can have sample packages mailed to their door to try things out before buying larger quantities in the mall. Many netizens are taking advantage of the samples to shave down their monthly expenses.

"A set of DHC products, Garnier Aqua Defense, a Lancome cell phone charm and even cookies are available as free samples," Zhang Dan, a free sample orderer, said. "Free samples have taken some of the pressure off my daily expenses. I saved nearly 1,000 yuan last month."

Zhang was one of the first users of 17try.cn, a Web site that helps visitors apply for free sample packages, this August. "At the beginning, I applied for free samples just for fun. I gradually just got addicted," she said.

Since then, Zhang has become an experienced "tryren." "Not just cosmetics – I apply for free samples of all kinds of daily necessities via the Web. Even beverages, magazines and soaps. If I use all the free samples, I can save almost a third of my monthly pay," she said.

Applying for free samples online is a practice that began in Western countries. Many people apply for sample products to evaluate whether they should purchase a larger quantity, and some review the samples to share their opinions with others.

Many domestic Web sites like 17try.cn have brought sample products to China. After passing a series of identity checks, users will be eligible to receive free sample packages from the Web site. The whole process is totally free, even delivery.

Other Web sites

- 17try.cn
- itry.cn
- liketry.com

Swap to satisfaction

It used to be easy to splurge on yet another pair of shoes. But with everything going up except their paychecks, many shoppers have taken to the Web to barter their way to the object of their desire.

According to statistics from eachnet.com, swap advertisements have jumped 30 percent in the last three months.

"I used to avoid this kind of thing, but the economic slump left me without any

other choices. Now, I'm kind of fond of it," Meng Yan, a Beijing worker, said. "My initial swap was a necklace for a pair of shoes. At this point, that necklace has become a brand-name bag."

Other Web sites

- bjhwk.cn
- ewuqu.com
- huanke.com

Trimming budget fluff

The accounting functions on Web sites like kaixin.com mostly cater to the office worker crowd. Many cubicle dwellers use the sites to track their everyday expenses and weed out unnecessary spending.

Maintaining an online account book can remind people to save money every day, and that extra money may be better off in the bank during this year's financial pinch.

Other Web sites

- uiuo.com
- bbcash.com
- caakee.com



CFP Photo



Photo provided by NE·TIGER

Peony revolution

NE·TIGER's 09' spring and summer collection

By He Jianwei

A female Kunqu Opera performer sang as the curtain rose to show NE·TIGER's new lineup for China Fashion Week November 5 at the Golden Hall of the Beijing Hotel.

The 2009 collection's theme is "National beauty captured in Hua Fu." It embodies the Chinese quest for a renaissance in luxury fashion. "The Peony is one of China's national symbols. Each finely-crafted item of Hua Fu presents its own image of this symbol of the wealth of Chinese civilization," Zhang Zhifeng, founder and the art director of NE·TIGER, said.

The new collection comes in five colors: black, yellow, green, red and blue. "The five colors symbolize Chinese civilization. Each dynasty has been dominated by a color of clothing, such as black in Qin Dynasty (221 BC-206 BC), blue in the Southern and Northern Dynasties (420-589), green in Song Dynasty (960-1279) and golden yellow in Ming (1368-1644) and Qing (1644-1911) dynasties. Red is the everlasting national

color," Zhang said.

"NE·TIGER's Hua Fu is not simply a copy of some dynasty's style, but an attempt to bridge historical gaps and reunite diverging currents (in fashion); an attempt to build links between costume and fashion from the unfolding sequence of dynasties and periods," he said.

A spinning wheel was placed on the stage to show the traditional techniques used in NE·TIGER's new collection. At the end of the show, two craftsmen took the stage. One was Wang Jialiang, the fifth generation of a family of Kesi makers who used to make garments for royalty. The other was Wang Yuxiang, a master who declared the art of Kesi to be on the brink of extinction.

Kesi, or Cut Silk, refers to silk tapestry with cut designs. It is a unique traditional silk weaving technique with more than 4,000 years' history. Kesi uses raw silk as a warp yarn and boiled-off silk as weft yarn. Kesi is as much a technique as it is an art. As the oldest woven textile in China, Kesi can be

traced back to the Loulan in Han Dynasty, and it was considered a tribute worthy of an emperor through the ages. It has been prized as the Treasure of Oriental Art and Most Dignified of Woven Textiles since its inception for its style and value. However, few masterpieces have been handed down to posterity, and only a handful of artisans can still produce Kesi.

"Besides that technique, I also use Yun Jin, the Yun Brocade with more than 1500 years' history in fabric use. 'Jin' means it uses refined materials and irreplaceable handcraft skill for its unique effect. The Zhuan-gua process produces only 5 centimeters per day, so it is commonly said that 'an inch of Yun Brocade is an inch of gold,'" Zhang said.

The background music used the pure and natural tones of Kun opera, the sound of an old Kesi machine, rhythmic footsteps on the stage and droplets. "Like a sea of flowers, these eighty gowns flow with a whispered tale of beauty, legend and ancient civilization," he said.

Cure for the artists' financial blues



By Li Jing

Gu Xiong and Yang Shu, Chongqing-based artists, were part of the '85 New Wave Art movement that swept southwest China. Their desire to hold a joint exhibition was delayed until now, in the midst of a global financial crisis.

Financial woes have cooled the international market for Chinese contemporary art which, to some extent, has been identified as a period of "alienation." Gu and Yang's art is seen as an antidote.

"Gu Xiong and Yang Shu are a fortunate cure for alienation," Tang Jing, curator of the exhibition, said. She said that even though the artists lived through the last two tumultuous decades, their work is fully integrated and not created merely to earn a living or find fame.

Gu, now a scholar at the Art Department of British Columbia University, uses objects from daily life to unveil the realities of the era in which he struggled for cultural identity. Yang skillfully combines Western art with traditional Chinese painting styles.

Gu Xiong and Yang Shu Joint Exhibition

Where: Beijing Center for the Arts, 23 Qianmen Dong Dajie, Dongcheng District

When: Until December 8, daily except Monday 10 am – 10 pm

Admission: Free

Tel: 6559 8008

Friday, November 21

5

Exhibition

Wei Jia 2004-2008 Exhibition

Where: Star Gallery, 2 Qiuxianqiao Lu, Chaoyang District

When: Until December 15, daily except Monday 11 am – 6 pm

Admission: Free

Tel: 8459 9631

The Game is Not Over – Joint Exhibition of Young Chinese Artists

Where: Arario Beijing,

Brewery Art Complex, Beihuqu Lu, Andingmen Wai Dajie, Chaoyang District

When: Until January 18, daily except Monday 10 am – 6 pm

Admission: Free

Tel: 5202 3800

Movie

Viridiana

This film, directed by Luis Buñuel, received the Palm D'or at the Cannes Film Festival in 1961.

Where: Instituto Cervantes in Beijing, A1 Gongti Nan Lu, Chaoyang District

When: 7 pm

Admission: Free

Tel: 5879 9666

Fargo

Where: Club Obiwan, 4 Xihai Xiyuan, Xicheng District

When: 8 pm

Admission: Free

Tel: 6617 3231

Nightlife

Tun Ladies' Night

Ladies drink for free from 9 pm to midnight.

Where: Tun Bar, 4 Gongti Bei Lu, Chaoyang District

When: 9 pm

Admission: Free

Tel: 6585 5866

Hush Hush

Maxim and Playboy model DJ Ngelik throws some of the hardest techno and sexiest house around.

Where: Zera Bar (inside Hilton Hotel), 1 Dongfang Lu, Chaoyang District

When: 10 pm

Admission: 60 yuan

Tel: 5865 5000-5050

Upcoming

Dance

Moment of Color, Undetermined Domain

Who: Beijing Dance/LDTX (Leidong Tianxia)

Where: Cultural Palace of Nationalities Theater, 49 Fuxingmen Nei Dajie, Xicheng District

When: November 22, 7:30 pm

Admission: 45-75 yuan

Tel: 6406 8888

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Saturday, November 22

Exhibition

Quiet Quest – Realism to Abstraction

This is the second abstract joint exhibition organized by Onemoon Gallery, which features 16 painters and two sculptors from three generations.

Where: Onemoon Contemporary Art, Ditan Park, Andingmen Wai Dajie, Dongcheng District

When: Until December 31, daily except Monday 10 am – 6 pm

Admission: Free

Tel: 6427 7748

Heterogeneous – Li Jianping Solo Exhibition

Through miserable

expressions in crystalline faces, Li portrays the state of people under social pressure. This is the first solo exhibition of Li, who is also a teacher at the Hubei Institute of Fine Arts.



Where: Expol-Sources

Art Space, 2 Jiuxianqiao Lu, Chaoyang District

When: Until December 21, daily except Monday 10:30 am – 6:30 pm

Admission: Free

Tel: 6431 4793

The Past from the Future – Choi Jiman Solo Exhibition

Where: Arario Beijing, Brewery Art Complex, Beihuqu Lu, Andingmen Wai Dajie, Chaoyang District

When: Until January 18, daily except Monday 10 am – 6 pm

Admission: Free

Tel: 5202 3800

Nightlife

Black Cat Bone Release Party

At this not-to-be-missed live show, Beijing-based Des

McGarry and his blues band release their much anticipated debut album.

Where: Yugong Yishan, 3 Zhangzi Zhong Lu, Xicheng District

When: 9 pm

Admission: 80 yuan

(includes the CD)

Tel: 6404 2711

Happy Ending

Patrick Yu of Blink Events and Gao Hu of Acupuncture Records make joyful house vibrations together.

Where: White Rabbit Club, C2, Haoyun Jie, 29 Zaoying Lu, Chaoyang District

When: 10 pm

Cost: 70 yuan

Tel: 13321123678

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Sunday, November 23

Exhibition

Living Space – 2009 Philip Hayden Foundation's Contemporary

Printmaking Exhibition

This exhibition addresses the theme of environmental protection with works that represent aspects of living space. Each artist has produced an original

print for packaging in 50 calendars. Each is signed, dated and numbered by the artists.

Where: Red Gate Gallery, Dongbianmen Watchtower, Chongwen District

When: Until November 30, daily 11 am – 6 pm, Admission: Free

Tel: 6525 1005

No Wave – Video Installation

Where: Arario Beijing, Brewery Art Complex, Beihuqu

Lu, Andingmen Wai Dajie, Chaoyang District

When: Until January 18, daily except Monday 10 am – 6 pm

Admission: Free

Tel: 5202 3800

Broken Landscape – Liang Shaoji Solo Exhibition

"Broken Landscape" is the extension and expansion of Liang Shaoji's 2007 solo exhibition "Cloud." The artwork

in "Broken" portrays fractured visual images that use the silk-worm to reflect nature, life, science, history and society within a Zen framework.

Where: ShanghART gallery, 261 Caochangdi, Chaoyang District

When: Until December 31, daily except Monday 11 am – 6 pm

Admission: Free

Tel: 6432 3202

Stage in December

Concert

Wu Muye Piano Recital

Who: Wu Muye

Where: Forbidden City Music Hall, inside Zhongshan Park, Dongcheng District

When: December 13, 7:30 pm

Admission: 30-380 yuan

Tel: 6559 8306

Music from Oscar-winning Films

Who: China Film Symphony Orchestra

Where: Beijing Concert Hall, 1 Bei Xinhua Jie, Xicheng District

When: December 13, 7:30 pm

Admission: 20-150 yuan

Tel: 6605 7006

Batko Delorko Piano Concert

Who: Batko Delorko

Where: Beijing Concert Hall, 1 Bei Xinhua Jie, Xicheng District

When: December 14, 7:30 pm

Admission: 20-150 yuan

Tel: 6605 7006

Elaine Paige's Music

Who: Elaine Paige

Where: Great Hall of the People (west side of Tiananmen Square), Xicheng District

When: December 14, 7:30 pm

Admission: 180-1,500 yuan

Tel: 5165 6039

Music by the Shanxi Provincial Orchestra

Who: Shanxi Provincial Orchestra

Where: National Grand Theater Music Hall (west side of the Great Hall of the People), Xicheng District

When: December 3-4, 7:30 pm

Admission: 50-380 yuan

Tel: 6655 0000

Flamenco Dance Sevilla

Who: Maria Pages Dance Company

Where: National Grand Theater Music Hall (west side of the Great Hall of the People), Xicheng District

When: December 5-6, 7:30 pm

Admission: 180-680 yuan

Tel: 6655 0000

Anne Sofie Von Otter Concert

Who: Anne Sofie Von Otter

Where: National Grand Theater Music Hall (west side of the Great Hall of the People), Xicheng District

When: December 10, 7:30 pm

Admission: 80-580 yuan

Tel: 6655 0000

Dance

Burning Steps

Who: Song and Dance Troupe of the People's Liberation Army's General Political Department

Where: National Grand Theater Music Hall (west side of the Great Hall of the People), Xicheng District

When: December 1-2, 7:30 pm

Admission: 180-680 yuan

Tel: 6655 0000

Stars

Who: Guangzhou Song and Dance Company

Where: National Grand Theater Music Hall (west side of the Great Hall of the People), Xicheng District

When: December 9, 7:30 pm

Admission: 50-400 yuan

Tel: 6655 0000

Drama

The Canterville Ghost

Who: TNT Theater Britain

Where: Mei Lanfang Grand Theater, 48 Hepingli Dajie, Xicheng District

When: December 12-14, 7:30 pm

Admission: 80-680 yuan

Tel: 5833 1218

(By Li Jing)

Taking healthcare into your own hands

By Han Manman

Do you know how to diagnose a small illness and buy the proper drugs? Are you actively managing your own health? The WHO Congress on Traditional Medicine ended in Beijing last week, and these questions topped the three-day conference in its goal of promoting "self-care" and "self-medication."



CFP Photo

Home care

"People should be encouraged to care for themselves and self-medicate responsibly," David Spangler, vice president of the American Consumer Healthcare Products Association, said. Such care could reduce the public's dependence on doctors.

However, self care and self-medication remains under-practiced in China.

"The [proposed] Chinese medicine reform has started many debates. But they all focus on how to solve the problem of expensive medical care," Bai Huiliang, director of the China Nonprescription Medicines Association, said.

"We need a change in mindset. We should think about how to avoid illness and how to protect ourselves. Many developed countries, especially those in Europe, encourage people to self-medicate if they are not seriously ill However, few Chinese people know how to do it properly," Bai said.

Spangler said a recent survey found that a third of US residents used self-medication to handle small illnesses.

Self-medication

Self-medication is the use of a registered medicine, without a doctor's prescription, to treat or prevent symptoms of a minor ailment, either by the individual's own initiative or following the advice of a healthcare professional.

"Over-the-counter" (OTC) medicines are generally accepted as an important part of healthcare.

People are demanding greater independence and responsibility for their own healthcare.

Benefits

Consumers have more healthcare choices today than ever before. OTC medicines do more than relieve aches, pains and itches – some can prevent tooth decay, cure athlete's foot and help manage recurring conditions like vaginitis, migraine, allergy and minor pains from arthritis.

It can also:

Treat symptomatic ailments that do not require a doctor.

Reduce the pressures on medical services and costs.

Increase the availability of healthcare to people living in remote areas.

Enable patients to manage their own chronic conditions.

When to self-medicate

If individuals choose to self-medicate, they should be able to differentiate the symptoms of a minor ailment from a major one, and know which products are suitable for their condition. Follow the directions for use of the product as provided on the product's label. Minor, self-limiting, conditions that may be suitable for self-medication include:

- Colds and flu
 - Incomplete or difficult digestion, including heartburn
 - Infrequent or difficult passing of stools
 - Mild to moderate pain, swelling and fever including headache, backache, muscular pain, toothache, sports-related strains and sprains or pain from other minor injuries
 - Mild to moderate skin problems like cuts, blisters, minor burns, insect bites, eczema, teenage skin problems and warts
 - Mouth ulcers or other minor disorders of the mouth and lips such as cold sores
 - Symptoms of a blocked or runny nose, including hay fever
 - Sore throat
 - Sunburn
 - Vomiting, diarrhea or nausea
- Know when to seek further medical attention and when not to self-medicate.

Drugs commonly used

1. Paracetamol, which is used for fever, acts as a painkiller too. Abuse can cause liver damage or death.

2. Analgesics or painkillers are used for joint pain, gout and muscle aches. Overdose can cause kidney damage or death.

3. Cough medications can be used to treat coughs caused by the common cold. However, they can be addictive if they contain codeine.

4. Antihistamines are used for symptomatic relief and are not a cure for the common cold or allergies. Most antihistamines cause drowsiness and should not be taken prior to driving or operating machinery. However, newer types which do not cause drowsiness are now available.

5. Antacids are acid blockers used to treat gastritis and heartburn. See a doctor if gastritis or heartburn recurs frequently. Taking antacids may mask more serious conditions such as stomach cancer. They can also bind to a number of drugs and lessen their effect. If a patient is on another long-term medication, he should consult a doctor before taking antacids.

6. Anti-diarrhea medications may not be needed in all cases of diarrhea, as it is a self-limiting illness. In cases of chronic diarrhea, these medications are not a substitute for treatment of the underlying cause.

7. Skin creams, ointments or lotions are used for eczema, an allergy-related condition. Prolonged use of strong steroids can cause dermal atrophy. Patients tend to self-medicate with anti-fungal creams even though the skin condition may not be caused by fungus. It is always best to consult a doctor before using such creams. Certain acne preparations give rise to side effects such as dry skin and itching. If these occur, discontinue use and see a doctor instead.

8. The more common Antibiotics are ampicillin, amoxicillin and erythromycin. People tend to start antibiotics left over from a previous prescription to treat a current problem. This should never be done, as an antibiotic might not be necessary at all and the dose taken may be wrong. Always finish the whole course of antibiotic treatment, otherwise it could lead to the growth of resistant strains of bacteria.

Tips

To ensure that consumers continue to use products safely, the China Nonprescription Medicines Association recommends the following four-point plan for using over-the-counter medications:

- 1** Always carefully read each product's label. If you have questions, talk to a doctor, nurse or pharmacist.
- 2** The period for self-medication varies, but should normally be no longer than three to seven days. If symptoms have not been resolved within this time or if symptoms return when treatment is stopped, users should seek further medical attention.
- 3** Never misuse over-the-counter medications by taking them longer or in higher doses than the label recommends. Symptoms that persist are a clear signal that it is time to see a doctor.
- 4** Discontinue use and ask a doctor if you have a reaction to any medication.

A new twist on the familiar



1. Sun Qifeng, a famous Chinese artist, painting a porcelain vase.

2. Pottery fans trying to make a vase.

3. Porcelain displayed at the workshop's leisure bar.

Photos provided by Fei Zhendong



Porcelain plates describing Peking Opera characters hang in the courtyard.

By Jackie Zhang

Nature has always been a favorite topic of artists. They depict its beauty in paintings, capture its radiance in photographs and compose music giving homage to it. But when an art workshop is held in a scenic spot, it will attract not only artists but ordinary visitors.

Xiaotangshan in Changping District is one of Beijing's nearest suburban areas where people can find lakes, mountains and a hot spring. But if you have grown tired of hot springs and village tours, then add its pottery workshop to your main itinerary for a new twist on the familiar.



Through this doorway, visitors enter an authentic pottery world.

The Jingdezhen technique

The Shangqingfang Pottery Workshop was founded by four pottery fans, one of them an art teacher named Fei Zhendong. He is also the workshop's manager. Their relationship with porcelain factories and companies in Jingdezhen, a town in Jiangxi Province famous for the ceramics, helped the group develop the workshop. Their first workshop was held in Tianjin last year and only this year brought to Beijing.

In Beijing, there are few kilns for firing pottery apart from those established specifically for emperors. "We started this workshop to fill the gap to some extent, aside from wanting to introduce the famous Jingdezhen porcelain and pottery-making technique," said Fei.

All the equipment and materials for the workshop were transported from Jingdezhen. Workers have also been brought in from the southeastern town to "give visitors a genuine Jingdezhen pottery-making experience," Fei said.

The Jingdezhen experience

Artists and ordinary visitors without any background in pottery-making are welcome to join the workshop. But note that the technique is quite tricky and will take amateurs a longer time to master.

By combining Chinese painting skills with pottery-making, the workshop is a great way to express a multitude of ideas. Participants can create cups, glasses, vases, plates and draw on these objects whatever they like. The workshop's staff will then fire the objects in a kiln and a week later, deliver them to their owners. If some people do not want to create pottery from scratch, they can choose to draw on an already-fired pottery.

Learning the art of pottery-making from A to Z requires months of hard work, Fei said. "There are 72 procedures involved in making one piece. No professional pottery maker has mastered all the procedures. One worker will usually specialize in only one procedure since it needs a lot of time and practice to master," he said. "Through the workshop, people can witness a part of each procedure just for experience. They don't have to go through the whole thing from beginning to end."

The workshop gives basic pottery-making classes, introduces porcelain to beginners and teaches people how to evaluate porcelain. Interested parties should phone the shop to make an appointment. There are presently five artists working there on contract.

Tel: 13911112205

Getting there:

There are two ways to get to the workshop. Take Jingcheng Expressway or Litang Lu to Mafangqiao Bridge. Enter Mafang Village from the west side of the road and you will see the workshop opposite the Mafang Primary School. The Litang Lu route might take longer if traffic is bad.

Fees:

If you choose to paint on an already-fired pottery, just pay for the pottery, which costs 50 yuan per piece. If you want to create pottery from scratch, the price is 300 yuan per person, which includes food, mainly are village dishes. You can ask for what you want to eat.

Living there:

There are five beds in the shop for participants who want to spend more time on their work. Each bed costs 50 yuan a night.

Entertainment:

The area has space for parties or a barbeque. The barbeque pits may be used for free, but bring your own food because you will not be able to buy any.

Facheng

No noise and crowd zone

By Jackie Zhang

Facheng Village is said to be the "smallest village area" in Beijing. Surrounded by mountains, the village covers almost seven square kilometers and is home to only 40 families. Rivers cut through the mountains, so there are two reservoirs in the village with plenty of fish and shrimp. With a huge variety of plants growing in the mountains, it is the best place in Beijing to find pure honey.

The village entrance



Peaceful retreat

Facheng is hidden on National Road 109. Drive along the road heading west to find the gate to the village by the roadside. Visitors do not have to pay an entrance fee. Upon entering the gate, you will find a 2-kilometer-long paved granite road, said to be the longest paved stone plate road in Beijing. Forests line both sides of the road through to the village.

Some of its houses were built in the 1950s, while some villas were built more recently. Plants and flowers line every road in the village, and pavilions and corridors dot ponds and rivers. Since few people live in the village, it is a perfect retreat from the crowded and noisy city, where visitors can rediscover the meaning of peace.

Idyllic village tour

Facheng began to develop its tourism industry only in 1999, so the village still retains its original look and is fairly quiet. Most of the sounds you will hear come from animals like birds, dogs and sheep. There are no signs directing visitors to scenic spots, so a walk around the village is definitely an adventure: you will encounter villagers going about their daily routine,



Local villagers are professionals at raising bees.



Explore the forests on a stone path.



Village houses

come across interesting plants and get close enough to touch farm animals.

Two travel agencies operate within the village and there are parking areas for visitors. Six families have also opened their homes as lodging houses to those who want to stay overnight.

Honey and bees

With plenty of trees in the area, Facheng became an ideal place for bee-keeping and harvesting honey. The surrounding clean bodies of water have also made it an ideal environment for bees. Beehives

are everywhere in the village and there is fresh honey to taste and take back home.

Getting there:

Drive along the No 109 National Road. At the 70-kilometer point, watch out for a sign that tells you to turn into Facheng. Alternatively, visitors can take Subway Line 1 to Pingguoyuan Station and from there, take bus 929.

Accommodation:

An overnight stay with villagers costs 80 yuan each person, which also covers supper.



An old lady taking a stroll.

Photos by Li Changshan

Information – enough pie for everyone

By Morry Morgan

People, of all cultures, are reluctant to simply give information away. Like any commodity, information requires energy input and has an overall value. This belief is amplified in societies where resources, tangible or intangible, are scarce and the metaphorical pie won't feed all.

This might have been true for China in the past, but things have changed over the last 20 years. Today, there is an abundance of resources and opportunities, even in the challenging economic climate such as we face today. These changing conditions necessitate a different philosophy on information sharing and personal career development.

The bad news is, some people are reluctant to evolve and are stuck in their ways. The good news – for those willing to develop – is this change will help our careers and our companies.

Larry Wang, managing director of the recruitment firm Wang and Li Asia Resources, highlights the need for a change in philosophy towards information sharing. In his book *Know the Game, Play the Game*, Wang states that rather than creating unwanted competition, sharing information does the opposite by creating opportunity.

The old cliché, "knowledge is power," refers not to hoarding but to sharing. By keeping information to yourself, be it useful contact details or the secret of your sales techniques, you are not making yourself as

invaluable as you may suppose. You are, in fact, blocking the development of those around you, and that of your company.

As a leader of others, a director, manager or team supervisor, if you can make the people around you better, then you are highlighting your management ability. Even if you are not in a direct supervisory role, you can help to develop your team by sharing your expertise with others, espe-

"A career can be built by 'pushing' oneself up by creating a team below, rather than 'pulling' oneself into a job vacancy above."

cially newcomers. It is this outstanding quality that high level managers are seeking – the ability, and more importantly, the desire, to develop those around you.

You are not creating competition for yourself which could threaten your coveted role. By sharing information and becoming a hub of knowledge, you are allowing the opportunities for promotion and general career advancement to multiply and grow. You are developing your company, and this will be not go unnoticed.

The cynical voices will argue that by sharing information you give away valuable expertise and create a risk of replacement. However, rather than making oneself redundant, Wang said



CFP Photo

that a career can be built by "pushing" oneself up by creating a team below, rather than "pulling" oneself into a job vacancy above. Management would be foolish to replace an individual who is competent in a position and who can train others to the same level of competency. Such staff members are rare assets.

Unfortunately, this change towards information sharing will not happen without input. This is where personally

encouraging communication and its links to career advancement fall into your hands. Combining the TALK (Tell, Ask, Listen and Know) principle, with the wisdom of Larry Wang in regular staff meetings and placed on notice boards and in common areas, is a great start. These days, the pie is big enough for everyone – you just might have to remind them.

Morry Morgan is general manager of ClarkMorgan Corporate Training.

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Dining

French Gastronomic Festival

Lose yourself in a grand festival of French cuisine at Sofitel Wanda Hotel. The feast combines authentic dishes created by guest chef Jean-Baptiste Natali. Lunch is priced at 178 yuan. The superior dinner is priced 488 yuan, or pay 888 yuan for a luxurious feast. Elevate your senses with Dom Perignon champagne for 328 yuan and a set course for 1,888 yuan. All fees are subject to a 15 percent surcharge.

Where: Michelin Star Restaurant, Sofitel Wanda Beijing, Tower C, Wanda Plaza, 93 Jianguo Lu, Chaoyang District
When: November 17-23
Tel: 8599 6666 ext 6528

Thanksgiving Buffet

Immerse yourself in this special Thanksgiving buffet of Roasted Whole Turkey with Chestnut and Cranberry Sauce, Home-Baked Apple Pie, Pumpkin Cheesecake, Chocolate Pecan Pie with Rum and Raisin and Maple and Honey-Glazed Leg of Ham.

Where: Elements Restaurant, Hilton Beijing, 1 Dongfang Lu, Dong Sanhuan Bei Lu, Chaoyang District
When: November 27
Cost: 188 yuan (lunch); 208 yuan (dinner)
Tel: 5865 5240

Thanksgiving Dinner Buffet

The Square has prepared a sumptuous dinner buffet for Thanksgiving. Buy two buffet passes and get a third

free. Beverages include soft drinks and local beer.

Where: The Square Restaurant, Novotel Beijing West Zhongguancun, 36 Haidian Nan Lu, Haidian District

When: November 27
Cost: 138 yuan net
Tel: 8266 9999 ext 5905



Traditional American Thanksgiving

Celebrate this Thanksgiving in style with a distinctive buffet. New York executive chef Robert Stern will serve this dinner in traditional American style. Dinner is half-off for US citizens.

Where: CBD International Restaurant, Grand Millennium Hotel, Fortune Plaza, 7 Dong Sanhuan Zhong Lu, Chaoyang District

When: November 27
Cost: 388 yuan (includes Turkey and trimmings, free flowing wine, local beer and bourbon cocktails)
Tel: 6530 9383

Hotel

Crowne Plaza Zhongguancun opens

Crowne Plaza Beijing Zhongguancun, a truly international hotel, is located in the center of Beijing's technology park. The hotel has 300 rooms designed for business and leisure travelers. Its medley of four restaurants and bars can satisfy any appetite. It offers the ultimate meeting experience with its spacious ballroom, two multi-function rooms and eight conference rooms. Amenities include a spa, well-equipped gym, swimming pool, steam bath and sauna.

Where: Crowne Plaza Beijing Zhongguancun, 106 Zhichun Lu, Haidian District

ian District
Tel: 5993 8888

Beijing gets Asia-Pacific's first aloft

Aloft Beijing Haidian, the first aloft hotel in Asia Pacific opens in Beijing.

With its Sassy Savvy Space attitude, aloft Beijing Haidian offers a total sensory experience with 186 urban-inspired, loft-like rooms. Its Hong Kong style restaurant with as many as 30 kinds of dim sum will pamper Asian travelers who treasure their time. The fitness center and indoor pool are a new experience for visitors looking for a pleasant respite.

Where: Aloft Beijing Haidian, Tower 2, 25 Yuanda Lu, Haidian District
Tel: 8889 8000

Aviation

Emirates revises fares on China routes

Dubai-based Emirates Airline recently announced a revision of its business and economy-class fares for tickets issued within China. Discounts extend to a number of popular destinations.

Morning service to Beijing will see a discount of 36 percent or more on any of 56 selected Emirates flights. Passengers departing Guangzhou and Shanghai can receive attractive discounts on several destinations in the Middle East, Europe, Africa and South America.

Air France and KLM launch the first online social network

Air France and KLM opened bluenity.com, the first social network Web site for air travelers. Sign up with bluenity.com to share top tips for hotels, restaurants and shopping anywhere in the world. The free site is available in French, English and Dutch, and allows customers to publish their flight schedules and receive updates on others'.

(By Sun Feng)

Chinglish story

This column focuses on Chinglish mistakes in our daily life. If you have any experiences to share, send them to Gan Tian at gantian@ynet.com.



CFP Photo

The pot calling the kettle black

By Venus Lee

A few months before my graduation, one of my friends, Jane Liu, moved into her sister's place to save on rent money. But she and her sister quarreled so much over tiny things that she decided to move out last week.

I witnessed one of their squabbles when I was invited to their apartment for dinner one weekend. I arrived to hear Jane's sister complaining about the clutter. I noticed that the living room and Jane's bedroom were a mess. Empty soft drink bottles littered the living room floor, skincare products were scattered on the dining table, clothes were piled on the sofa and shopping bags dotted every corner of the room.

"Can't you organize your facial products? Can't you stuff your laundry in the washing

machine? You can't even handle these little things, how can you manage your life?" Jane's sister said.

Jane replied sharply: "I'm exhausted from days of shuttling from one job fair to the next and going to interviews. At night, I'm so depressed by the lack of results that I'm in no mood to tidy up the apartment. If I just find a job, things will change."

"I don't think that's a good enough reason not to pick up after yourself," her sister said. "I've already told you several times to put your stuff in order, but you never listen."

Jane felt humiliated to receive a tongue-lashing in front of me, so she fought back. "How dare you accuse me when you're guilty of the same thing! You leave your make-up and magazines strewn all over the living

room. You leave empty soda bottles on the dining table. You leave your clothes in the washing machine hours after they're done. You're not my mother, so don't lecture me! If you don't want me here, I will move out!" She then rushed out of the living room crying.

I was left in the room with Jane's sister and stared awkwardly at the floor. Her sister finally spoke to say she might have been wrong to criticize Jane in front of me and asked me to find her sister and console her.

I found Jane crying in the yard and took her to a nearby cafe to calm her nerves. Garry, our British friend, was there and asked what was wrong when she saw Jane teary-eyed.

Jane said she had a quarrel with her sister and told Garry

the reason. "I hate her! I have had enough of her endless nagging. She always tells me how to do things, yet even she can't reach the bar she's set. It's so unfair! She blames me for the messy house, but she never thinks about her own shortcomings. It really is the crow laughing at the pig's black!"

Garry is an old China hand and is familiar with Chinese idioms, so he understood what Jane meant by "the crow laughing at the pig's black." "Westerners usually use the idiom 'the pot calling the kettle black.' It means to accuse another speaker of hypocrisy," Garry said. "In olden times, cast iron pots and kettles quickly got blackened from the soot of the fire. And if those objects were personified, the pot would then be hypocritical to insult the kettle's color."

Blacklist

Beijing Today has come up with Blacklist, a column of words or phrases commonly misused by Chinese speakers. If you're planning to be an English teacher, reporter or employee of a multinational company, then this page is your new best friend. Watch out for it each week.

Native Speaker: Penny Turner

1. From where your office space to your bathroom

The writer is clearly trying to describe the distance between two points: from the office to the bathroom. Some people might say, "from where your office is to your bathroom," but it does sound awkward. "From your office to your bathroom" is a simpler way to say it. And "space" can be dropped because places naturally connote space.

2. Award enterprises

The phrase sounds like it is talking about businesses (enterprises) that specialize in awards, or somebody giving enterprises an award. The reader is provided too little information to move forward on, but Professor Zhu has decoded the sentence for us and said that the reader actually means the latter. So, yes, "award prizes to enterprises" is correct.

Local professor: Zhu Shida

1. From where your office space to your bathroom

Grammatically, if you insist on using the relative pronoun, you will have to say: from where your office space is to your bathroom. However, this is not a good sentence. As the word "space" itself is a noun, simply say: from your office space to your bathroom.

2. Award enterprises

I can understand what the writer wishes to say, but his meaning is not fully expressed and his word structure is terrible. You may say, "Award prizes to enterprises," but never "Award enterprises." For the adjective form, it is "prize-winning enterprises." The verb award is a transitive one, and has to be followed by an object. For instance, award a gold medal to somebody or award the first prize to somebody.

Chinglish on the way

This column aims to identify Chinglish in public areas. If you see any Chinglish signs, please take a picture and send it to gantian@ynet.com together with your name and address.

Beijing Super Municipal in wine in smoke

By Tiffany Tan

This sign is quite alarming and makes you imagine the city engulfed in flames, smothered in smoke. The writer has the imagination to work for an ad agency, but the message should have been harmless; it was a store sign informing people that the place is "Beijing cigarette and liquor

supermarket."

The last two characters on the sign, *chaoshi*, together mean "supermarket." But for some unknown reason, the writer decided to break them up. *Chao* means "super," as in *chaoren* for Superman the comic book hero. *Shi*, the last character, means city, but in the context of local gover-

nance, refers to a "municipality."

If the writer had followed the order of the Chinese characters, the sign would still have been wrong, but it could have even been exultant: "Beijing in wine in smoke super municipal." But Beijing would probably not want to trade its title of "Olympic City" for that.



BURN AFTER READING

(2008)

Movie of the week

This 2008 black comedy was written, produced and directed by Joel and Ethan Coen. The film, released in October in China, stars John Malkovich, George Clooney, Tilda Swinton, Frances McDormand and Brad Pitt. It premiered August 27 when it opened the 2008 Venice Film Festival. The film is the brothers' first to follow their Academy Award winning Best Picture, *No Country for Old Men*.

Synopsis

Burn After Reading is a movie for adults, with adult themes and adult situations. As with all Coen brother movies, there will be people who love it and people who hate it.

The film was entertaining, dark and funny, and overall more enjoyable than *No Country for Old Men*. The best part of the movie was seeing how the great cast handled the odd-ball material they were given. The cast was perfectly suited for the Coen brothers' antics. There is violence, foul language and everyone is sleeping with everyone else, especially George Clooney.



CFP Photos

Scene 1:

CIA Headquarters, Langley, Virginia

(*Osbourne Cox is informed that he will be removed from his post.*)

Palmer (CIA officer): Things have not been going well, as you know. You have a drinking problem.

Osbourne Cox (Ozzie): I have a drinking problem? Huh ...

Palmer: This doesn't have to be unpleas-

ant. We found something for you in State. It's a lower clearance level, yes. But it's ... but it's not ... look, we're not ... we're not terminating you.

Ozzie: This is an insult. I have a drinking problem? We all have a drinking problem. What the fuck is this? Whose ass didn't I kiss? Huh? Let's be honest! This is a **crucifixion** (1), this is political and don't tell me it's not!

Scene 2:

Linda Litzke at the doctor's office

(*Linda talks to her doctor about her cosmetic surgeries.*)

Doctor: We take all the chicken fat off your buttocks, here, and the upper arms, and a little of your tummy.

Linda Litzke (Linda): Yeah, great.

Doctor: Now, we do breast augmentation with a tiny incision here.

Linda: Oh, that marker really tickles!

Doctor: And what about the upper leg, the higher inside thigh area? We can do liposuction there as well, but that area will respond to exercise. The buttocks and upper arms begin to store



more fat once you get up around forty – the body just tells it to go there. But the thighs will respond to toning exercises.

Linda: Yeah. I can work on my arms **till the cows come home** (2), but ...

Doctor: Uh-huh, well, also there are of course genetic factors.

Linda: But the Litzke people always were big. My mom had an ass that could pull a bus. Yeah, my Father's side too, although Dad seems to carry his weight out in front more.

Doctor: OK. And what about the face, you know, the window to the soul. You need sufficient slack, for the face to remain expressive.



(By Huang Daohen)

Scene 3:

at Linda Litzke's house

(*Linda and Chad finally got Ozzie's phone number and try to ask a reward for the secret CD.*)

Chad: I'm a **Good Samaritan** (3). I'm sorry I'm calling at such an hour, but I thought you might be worried.

Ozzie: Worried?

Chad: About the security of your shit.

Ozzie: What on earth are you talking about? Who am I speaking to?

Chad: I got your files ... um ... huh, the documents. I know these documents are sensitive, but I'm perfectly willing to give them back to you, your sensitive shit. You know at a time of your choosing.

Ozzie: What documents are you talking about?

Chad: OK. The bureau chief in Belgrade, we all call Slovak the butcher, he had very little report with his staff, and his dispatches ...

Ozzie: Report? Very little rapport ... with his staff, fucking moron! How did you get this?

Chad: Don't **blow a gasket** (4), bourne.

Ozzie: Who the fuck are you? You're way in, over your fucking head! I don't know who the fuck you are, but you have no idea what you're doing!

Chad: Oh! Why so uptight, Osbourne Cox? I'm just a Good Samaritan. You know this is a major inconvenience for us and we just thought a reward.

Ozzie: Uh! So it's money! You want money, OK ... listen to me ...

Chad: Yeah, why not? Am I **out of line** (5) here?

Scene 4:

CIA Headquarters, Langley, Virginia

CIA Superior: Wait, wait a minute. The gym manager is dead?

Palmer (CIA officer): Yes, sir.

Superior: The body is ...

Palmer: I guess ... gone, sir. Huh ... but there was, a ... um, snag.

Superior: What?

Palmer: Well ... um, this analyst, Cox, was attacking the gym guy. And it was in broad daylight, on the street. Our man ... huh, did not know what to do, he felt he had to **step in** (6).

Superior: Yes?

Palmer: He ... um, he shot the analyst ... he shot Cox.

Superior: Good. Great! Is he dead?

Palmer: No, sir, he's in a coma.

Superior: OK, OK ... if he wakes up, we'll worry about it then. Jesus, what a cluster fuck. So that's it then. No one else really knows anything?

Palmer: Um ... huh ... well, sir ... um, there is ...

Superior: What?

Palmer: There's the woman, the gym woman, Linda Litzke.

Superior: Oh fuck yeah! God! Where is she?

Palmer: We picked her up. We have her. She says, she'll ... huh, **play ball** (7) if we pay for some ... I know this sounds odd ... some surgeries that she wants. Cosmetic surgery. She said, she'll **sit on everything** (8).

Superior: How much?

Palmer: There were several procedures, all together they run to ...

Superior: Pay it. What did we learn, Palmer?

Palmer: I don't know, sir.

Superior: I don't fucking know either. I guess we learned not to do it again.

Palmer: Yes, sir.

Superior: I'm fucked if I know what we did.

Vocabulary

- 1 crucifixion:** severe and unjust punishment or suffering
- 2 till the cows come home:** for a long but indefinite time
- 3 Good Samaritan:** a person who gratuitously gives help or sympathy to those in distress
- 4 blow a gasket:** here means somebody has lost his temper
- 5 out of line:** in disagreement with what is accepted or practiced
- 6 step in:** to become involved or intervene
- 7 play ball:** here means to work together and cooperate
- 8 sit on everything:** to be silent